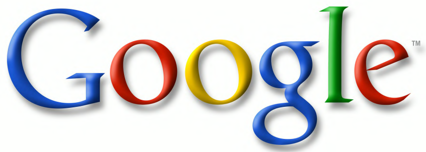

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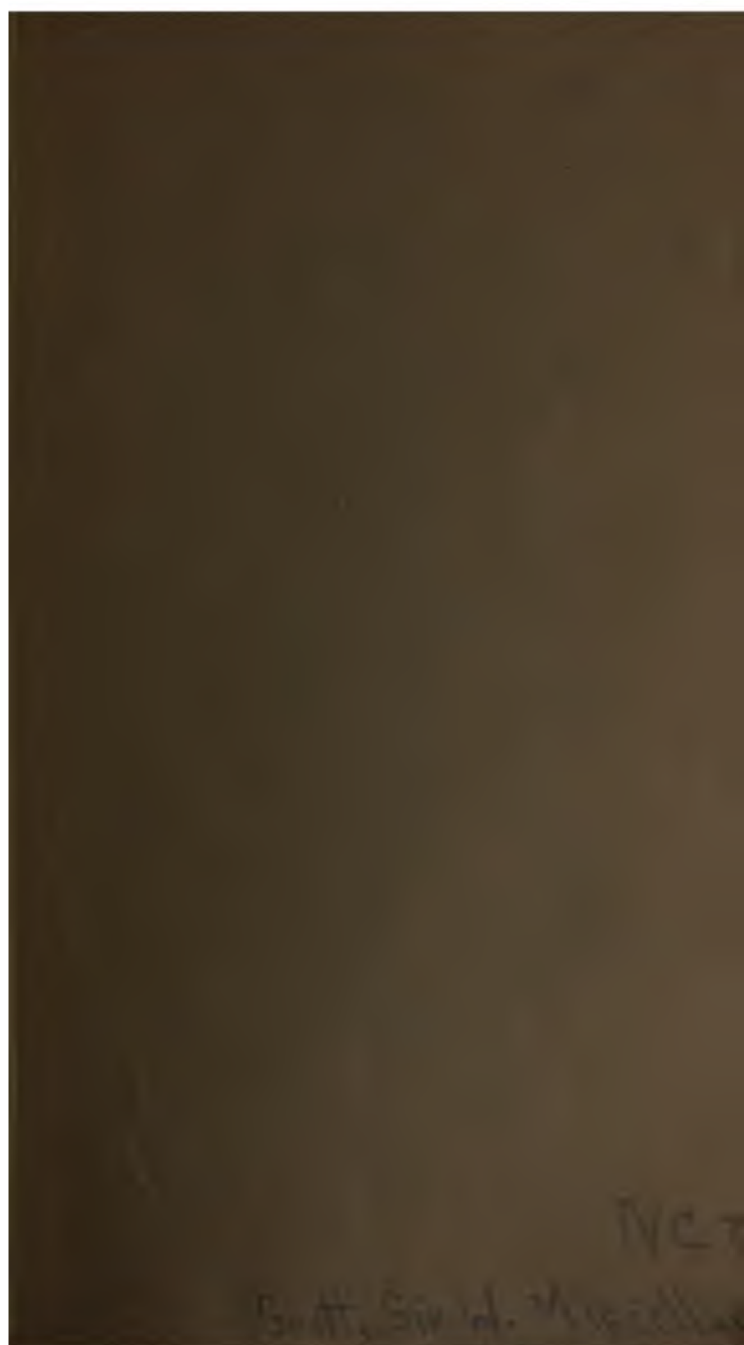

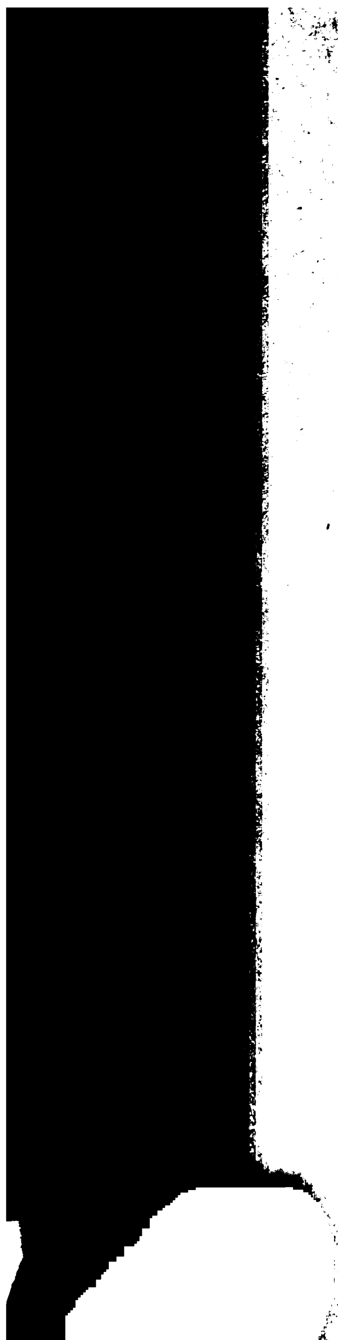

CRITICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS

ESSAYS

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT, Bart.

COLLECTED BY HIMSELF.

(NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED IN AMERICA.)

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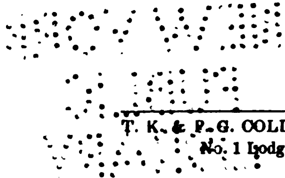

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MISCELLANIES

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

POETICAL CRITICISM.

EARLY ENGLISH POETRY.*

[Edinburgh Review, 1804.]

It is obvious to every one who has studied our language, whether in prose or poetry, that a luminous history of its rise and progress must necessarily involve more curious topics of discussion than a similar work upon any other European language. This opinion has not its source in national partiality, but is dictated by the very peculiar circumstances under which the English language was formed. The other European tongues, such at least as have been adapted to the purposes of literature, may be divided into two grand classes—those which are derived from the Teutonic, and those which are formed upon the Latin. In the former class, we find the German, the Norse, the Swedish, the Danish, and the Low Dutch, all of which, in words and construction, are

* *Ellis's*† *Specimen of the early English Poets.* Third edition. 3 vols. 1803.

† George Ellis, Esq., to whom the 5th Canto of Marmion is inscribed, was the coadjutor of Messrs. Canning and Frere, in the Anti-Jacobin, and the author of various separate works distinguished by extensive antiquarian knowledge, and elegant critical taste. He died in 1815, at the age of 70.

dialects of the Teutonic, and preserve the general character of their common source, although enriched and improved by terms of art or of science adopted from the learned languages, or from those of other kingdoms of civilized Europe. The second class comprehends the Italian, the Spanish, and the French, in all its branches. It is true, the last of these has, in modern times, owing to the number of French writers in every class and upon every subject, departed farther from its original than the two others; but still the ground-work is the Latin; and the more nearly any specimen approaches to it, it may be safely concluded to be the more ancient; for, in truth, we know no other rule for ascertaining the antiquity of any particular piece in the *Romanz* language, than by its greater or slighter resemblance to the speech of the ancient Romans, from which it derives its name. Thus every language of civilized Europe is formed of a uniform pattern and texture, either upon the Teutonic, or upon the Latin. But the same chance which has peopled Britain with such a variety of tribes and nations, that we are at a loss to conceive how they should have met upon the same spot—and that comparatively, a small one—has decreed that the language of Locke and of Shakspeare should claim no peculiar affinity to either of these grand sources of European speech; and that if on the one hand, its conformation and construction be founded on a dialect of the Teutonic, the greater number of its vocables should, on the other, be derived from the Romanz, or corrupted Latin of the Normans. It is interesting to observe how long these languages, uncongenial in themselves, and derived from sources widely different, continued to exist separately, and to be spoken respectively by the Anglo-Norman conquerors and the vanquished Anglo-Saxons. It is still more interesting to observe how, after having long flowed each in its separate channel, they at length united and formed a middle dialect, which, though employed at first for the mere purpose of convenience and mutual intercourse betwixt the two nations, at length superseded the individual speech of both, and became the apt record of poetry and of philosophy.

The history of poetry is intimately connected with that of language. Authors in the infancy of composition, like Pope in that of life, may be said to "lisp in numbers." History, religion, morality, whatever tends to agitate or to soothe the

passions, is, during the earlier stages of society, celebrated in verse. This may be partly owing to the ease with which poetry is retained upon the memory, in those ruder ages, when written monuments, if they at all exist, are not calculated to promote general information; and it may be partly owing to that innate love of song, and sensibility to the charms of flowing numbers, which is distinguishable even among the most savage people. But, whatever be the cause, the effect is most certain; the early works of all nations have been written in verse, and the history of their poetry is the history of the language itself. It therefore seems surprising, that where the subject is interesting in a peculiar as well as in a general point of view, a distinct and connected history of our poetry, and the language in which it is written, should so long have been a *desideratum* in English literature; and the wonder becomes greater when we recollect, that an attempt to supply the deficiency was long since made by a person who seemed to unite every quality necessary for the task.

The late Mr. Warton, with a poetical enthusiasm which converted toil into pleasure, and gilded, to himself and his readers, the dreary subjects of antiquarian lore, and with a capacity of labour apparently inconsistent with his more brilliant powers, has produced a work of great size, and, partially speaking, of great interest, from the perusal of which we rise, our fancy delighted with beautiful imagery, and with the happy analysis of ancient tale and song, but certainly with very vague ideas of the history of English poetry. The error seems to lie in a total neglect of plan and system; for, delighted with every interesting topic which occurred, the historical poet pursued it to its utmost verge, without considering that these digressions, however beautiful and interesting in themselves, abstracted alike his own attention, and that of the reader, from the professed purpose of his book. Accordingly, Warton's *History of English Poetry* has remained, and will always remain, an immense commonplace-book of *memoirs to serve for such an history*. No antiquary can open it, without drawing information from a mine which, though dark, is inexhaustible in its treasures; nor will he who reads merely for amusement ever shut it for lack of attaining his end; while both may probably regret the desultory excursions of an author, who wanted only system, and a more rigid attention to minute accuracy, to have perfected the great task he has left incomplete.

It is therefore with no little pleasure that we see a man of taste and talents advance to supply the deficiency in so interesting a branch of our learning,—a task to which Johnson was unequal, through ignorance of our poetical antiquities, and in which Warton failed, perhaps, because he was too deeply enamoured of them.

The elemental part of the English language, that from which it derives, not indeed the greater proportion of its words, but the rules of its grammar and construction, is the Anglo-Saxon; and Mr. Ellis has dedicated his first chapter to make the English reader acquainted with it. The example of their poetry, which he has chosen to exhibit, is the famous war-song in praise of Athelstane's victory in the battle of Brunenburg,—an engagement which checked for ever the victorious progress of the Picts and Scots, and limited their reign to the northern part of Britain. We cannot, from this poem, nor indeed from any other remnant of Anglo-Saxon poetry, determine what were the rules of their verse. Rhyme they had none; their rhythm seems to have been uncertain; and perhaps their whole poetry consisted in the adaptation of the words to some simple tune; although Mr. Ellis seems inclined to think, with Mr. Tyrwhitt, the verse of the Saxons was only distinguished from their prose by a "greater pomp of diction, and a more stately kind of march." To this specimen of Saxon poetry Mr. Ellis has subjoined a translation of it into the English of the age of Chaucer, which we recommend to our readers as one of the best executed imitations that we have ever met with. It was written by a friend of Mr. Ellis (Mr. Frere, if we mistake not) while at Eton School.

"The Mercians fought I understond,
There was gamen of the hond." . . &c.
"In Dacie of that gaming
Mony wemen hir hondis wring.
The Normannes passed that rivere,
Mid hevy hart and sorry chere.
The brothers to Wessex yode,
Leving the crowen and the tode,
Hawkes, doggis, and wolves, tho
Egles and mony other mo,
With the dede men for their mede,
On hir corses for to fede.
Sen the Saxonis first come
In schippes over the sea-fome,
Of the years that ben for gone
Greater bataile was never none," &c.

This appears to us an exquisite imitation of the antiquated English poetry; not depending on an accumulation of hard words, like the language of Rowley, which, in everything else, is refined and harmonious poetry, nor upon an agglomeration of consonants in the orthography, the resource of later and more contemptible forgers, but upon the style itself, upon its alternate strength and weakness, now nervous and concise, now diffuse and eked out by the feeble aid of expletives. In general, imitators wish to write like ancient poets, without ceasing to use modern measure and phraseology; but, had the conscience of this author permitted him to palm these verses upon the public as an original production of the fourteenth century, we know no internal evidence by which the imposture could have been detected.

From considering the state of the Anglo-Saxon poetry at and previous to the Conquest, Mr. Ellis turns his consideration to that of the invaders, and treats at considerable length of what may be called Anglo-Norman literature. It is well known, that the monarchs who immediately succeeded the conqueror, adopted his policy in fostering the language and arts of Normandy, in opposition to the Anglo-Saxons, whom they oppressed, and by whom they were detested. The French poetry was not neglected; and it is now considered as an established point, that the most ancient metrical romances existing in that language were composed, not for the court of Paris, but for that of London; and hence a British story, the glories of King Arthur, became their favourite theme. The ingenious Abbé de la Rue wrote several essays printed in the Archæologia, which throw great light upon the Anglo-Norman poets; and of this information Mr. Ellis has judiciously availed himself. But he also discovers, by the explanations attached to his extracts from Wace, that intimate acquaintance with the Romanz language, which is at once so difficult to acquire, and so indispensable to the execution of his history.

In the third chapter, we see the last rays of Saxon literature, in a long extract from Layamon's translation of the *Brut* of Wace. But so little were the Saxon and Norman languages calculated to amalgamate, that though Layamon wrote in the reign of Henry II, his language is almost pure Saxon, and hence it is probable, that if the mixed language, now called English, at all existed, it was deemed as yet unfit

for composition, and only used as a piebald jargon for carrying on the indispensable intercourse betwixt the Anglo-Saxons and Normans. In process of time, however, the dialect, so much despised, made its way into the service of the poets, and seems to have superseded the use of the Saxon, although the French, being the court language, continued to maintain its ground till a later period. Mr. Ellis has traced this change with a heedful and discriminating eye, and has guided us through the harsh numbers of the romancers and the compilers of legends, and through the wide waste of prosaic verse, in which it was the pleasure of Robert of Gloucester and Robert de Brunne to record the history of their country, down to that period when English poetry began to assume a classical form, and to counterbalance, in the esteem even of the kings and nobles, the hitherto triumphant Anglo-Norman. This grand change was doubtless brought on by very slow degrees, and it is difficult exactly to ascertain its progress. The history of English Minstrelsy, in opposition to that of the Anglo-Normans, would probably throw great light on this subject; for these itinerant poets must have made use of the English long before it was thought fit for higher purposes.

The epoch from which English may be considered as a classical language, may be fixed in the reign of Edward III, the age of Gower and of Chaucer, in which it was no longer confined to what the latter has called "the drafty riming" of the wandering minstrel, but employed in the composition of voluminous and serious productions, by men possessed of all the learning of the times.

It has been warmly disputed in what particular manner the father of English poetry contributed to its improvement. Mr. Ellis with great plausibility, ascribes this effect chiefly to the peculiar ornaments of his style, consisting in an affectation of splendour, and especially of Latinity, which is not to be found in the simple strains of Robert of Gloucester, or any of the anterior poets, nor indeed in that of Laurence Minot, or others about his own time.

In chapter ninth, the language of Scotland, and the history of her early poetry comes into consideration. This is a thorny point with every antiquary. The English and Scottish languages are in earlier times exactly similar; and yet, from the circumstances of the two countries, they must ne-

cessarily have had a separate origin. Mr. Ellis seems disposed to adopt the solution of Mr. Hume, who supposes the Saxon language to have been imposed upon the Scottish, by a series of successful invasions and conquests, of which history takes no notice. To this proposition in a limited degree, we are inclined to subscribe; for there is no doubt that the Anglo-Saxons of Bernicia extended themselves, at least occasionally, as far as the frith of Forth, occupied the Merse and Lothian, introduced into them their language, and when conquered by the Scots and Picts, were in fact the *Angli*, to whom, as subjects of the crown of Scotland, our King's charters were so frequently addressed. But we cannot admit these conquests to be supposed farther than they are proved; nor do we conceive that one province, though a rich one, could have imposed its language upon the other subjects of the kings who acquired it by conquest. There must have been some other source from which the Scoto-Teutonic is derived, than the Anglo-Saxon spoken in Lothian. This grand source we conceive to have been the language of the ancient Picts; nor would it be easy to alter our opinion. Those who are connoisseurs in the Scottish dialects, as now spoken, will observe many instances of words in the idiom of Angus-shire (the seat of the Picts) which can only be referred to a Belgic root; whereas those of South-country idiom may almost universally be traced to the Anglo-Saxon. The Norman, from which, as Mr. Ellis justly remarks, the Scottish dialect, as soon as we have a specimen of it, appears to have borrowed as much as the English, was probably introduced by the influx of Norman nobles, whom the oppression of their own kings drove into exile, or whom their native chivalrous and impatient temper urged to seek fortune and adventures in the court of Scotland. Having traced the origin of our language, the earlier Scottish poets, Barbour and Winton, pass in review, with specimens from each, very happily selected, to illustrate at once their own powers of composition, and the manners of the age in which they wrote. These are intermingled with criticisms, in which the reader's attention is directed to what is most worthy of notice, and kept perpetually awake by the lively and happy style in which they are conveyed.

The merit of Occleve and Lydgate are next examined, who, with equal popularity, but with merit incalculably in-

ferior, supported the renown of English poetry after the death of Chaucer. One specimen from the latter we cannot help extracting as irresistibly ludicrous.

"One of the most amusing passages in the Book of Troy relates to a well-known event in the life of Venus.

"The *smotry** smith, this swarte Vulcanus, * *Smoky.*
That whilom in hearte was so jealous
Toward Venus that was his wedded wife,
Whereof there rose a deadly mortal strife,
When he with Mars gan her first espy,
Of high malice, and cruel false envy,
Through the shining of Phebus' beams bright,
Lying a-bed with Mars her owne knight.
For which in heart he brent as any glede,* **A burning coal.*
Making the slander all abroad to sprede,
And gan thereon falsely for to muse.
"And God forbid that any man accuse
For so little any woman ever!
Where love is set, hard is to dissever!
For though they do such thing of gentleness,
Pass over lightly, and bear none heaviness,
Lest that thou be to woman odious!
And yet this smith, this false Vulcanus,
Albe that he had them thus espied,
Among Paynims yet was he defied
And, for that he so Falsely them awoke,
I have him set last of all my boke, [* *Mahometry.*
Amon the goddes of false mawmentry,"* &c. i. e. *idolatry.*
(Sign. L. i.)

"Upon this occasion, the morals of our poetical monk are so very pliant, that it is difficult to suppose him quite free from personal motives which might have influenced his doctrine. Perhaps he had been incommoded by some intrusive husband, at a moment when he felt tired of celibacy, and wished to indulge in a temporary relaxation from the severity of monastic discipline."

From Lydgate our author proceeds to James I of Scotland, upon whose personal qualities he pronounces a merited panegyric, accompanied with several extracts from the "Kingis Quair." The next chapter is peculiarly interesting. It contains a retrospect of the conclusions to be drawn from the information already conveyed; and this introduces a well-written and pleasing digression upon the private life of the English during the middle ages. We learn that, even in that early period, the life of the English farmer or yeoman was far superior in ease and comfort to that of persons of the same rank in France. Pierce Ploughman, a yeoman apparently, possessed a cow and calf, and a cart-mare for

transporting manure; and although, at one time of the year, he fed upon cheese curds and oat cakes, yet after Lammas, when his harvest was got in, he could " dress his dinner to his own mind." We also learn, that the peasants were so far independent, as to exact great wages; and doubtless these circumstances, combined with the practice of archery, gave the English infantry such an infinite advantage over those of other nations, consisting of poor half-fed serfs, and gained them so many battles in spite of the high-souled chivalry of France, and the obstinate and enduring courage of our Scottish ancestors. Mr. Ellis remarks, on this subject—" It is very honourable to the good sense of the English nation, that our two best early poets have highly extolled this useful body of men, while the French minstrels of the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, universally seem to approve the supercilious contempt with which the nobles affected to treat them. We have also much curious information concerning the dress of the period, particularly of the ladies, who in the day-time seem to have been wrapt up in furs, and in the night-time to have slept without shifts. The serenades, the amusements, the food, the fashions, the manners of the period, are all illustrated by quotations from the authors who have referred to them; and, with the singular advantage of never losing sight of his main subject, Mr. Ellis has brought together much information on collateral points of interest and curiosity, which will be new to the modern reader, and pleasing to the antiquary, by placing, at once, under his review, circumstances dispersed through many a weary page of black letter.

The reign of Henry VI, and those of the succeeding monarchs, down to Henry VIII, seem to have produced few poets worthy of notice. Two translators of some eminence occur during the former period, and the latter is graced by Harding, (a kind of Robert of Glocester *redivivus;*) Hawes, a bad imitator of Lydgate, ten times more tedious than his original; the Ladie Juliana Berners, who wrote a book upon hunting in execrable poetry; and a few other rhymers, who, excepting perhaps Lord Rivers, are hardly worth naming. During this period, however, the poetry of Scotland was in the highest state of perfection; and Mr. Ellis finds ample room, both for his critical and historical talents, in celebrating Henry the Minstrel, Hen-

rysoun, Johnstoun, Mercer, Dunbar, and Gawain Douglas. Upon the works of the two last Mr. Ellis dwells with pleasure; and his opinion may have some effect in refreshing their faded laurels. In the reign of Henry VIII, the Scottish bards continue to preserve their superiority; for, surely, the ribald Skelton, and the tiresome John Heywood, cannot be compared to Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, or to the anonymous author of the Mourning Maiden.

We have already taken notice of the very extensive range of discussion which this sketch embraces. It was therefore almost unavoidable that there should remain subjects on which we might have wished for farther information. The history of English minstrelsy in particular, makes too important a part of Mr. Ellis's subject for us to permit him to escape from it so slightly. As he has announced his intention to publish a second series of specimens, selected from the early metrical romances, we recommend strongly to him, to prefix such a prefatory memoir as may fill up this wide blank in the history of our language. We are the more earnest in this recommendation, because we know from experience that Mr. Ellis will manage, with the temper becoming a gentleman, a dispute which, though the circumstance seems to us altogether astonishing, has certainly had a prodigious effect in exciting the irritable passions of our antiquaries, and has been managed with a degree of acrimony only surpassed by the famous and rancorous quarrel about the Scots and Picts. We observe with pleasure, that, in repelling some attacks upon his first and second editions, Mr. Ellis has uniformly used the lance of *courtesy*, as a romancer would have said; and truly we have no pleasure in seeing his contemporaries spur their hobby-horses headlong against each other, and fight at *outrance*, and with *fer emoulu*. Mr. Ellis's style is uniformly chaste and simple, diversified by a very happy gaiety which enlivens even the most unpromising parts of his subject. We have only to add, that no author has passed over his own pretensions with such unaffected modesty, or given more liberal praise to the labours of others.

From the works of voluminous authors, Mr. Ellis has selected such passages as might give the best general idea of their manner; but he has also been indefatigable in seeking out all such beautiful smaller pieces as used to form the

little collections, called, in the quaint language of the times, Garlands. His own work may be considered as a new garland of withered roses. The list concludes with the reign of Charles II. The publication seems to have been made with the strictest attention to accuracy, except that, throughout the whole, the spelling is reduced to the modern standard, for which, we fear, Mr. Ellis may undergo the censure of the more rigid antiquaries. For our part, as all the antique words are carefully retained and accurately interpreted, we do not think that, in a popular work, intelligibility should be sacrificed to the preservation of a rude and uncertain orthography.

EARLY ENGLISH METRICAL ROMANCES.*

[Edinburgh Review, 1806.]

THE history, the laws, and even the religion of barbarous nations, are usually expressed in verse. Whether poetry is preferred for the sake of the facility with which it may be committed to memory where written records are unknown, or whether the solemnity of these subjects is supposed to require a mode of expression the most distant from that of common life, would be difficult to discover, and superfluous to inquire. But it is sufficiently obvious, that what is preserved only by recitation, must soon be altered and corrupted, enlarged or compressed, so as may best suit the powers of the reciter's memory, or most readily arrest the attention of those whom he wishes to please by the repetition. Thus, in the course of a few generations, the religious poem becomes a mythological fable, and the history degenerates into an incredible romance. Still, however, the poetry of an early age continues to be interesting to the moderns, even when entirely perverted from the purposes to which it was originally applied. The bard may have changed his subject from the facts occurring in his own period, or that of his father's, to the feats of foreign or imaginary heroes: but his work will not the less continue to reflect the manners of the time in which he composed. A Gothic poet, like a Gothic painter, discards all attention to local costume, and portrays his characters, his manners, his scenery, according to the characters, manners, and scenery of his own age. It is therefore no matter whether the scene be laid in Greece or in Taprobana; the description, however unlike what it is

* *Ellis's Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances.* 3 vols. 1805. *And Ancient English Metrical Romances.* Selected by JOSEPH RITSON.† 3 vols. 1802.

[† Joseph Ritson, the ingenious but whimsical and crabbed Antiquarian, died at Hoxton, 23d Sept. 1803.]

intended to represent, will always present a very just picture of the manners of France and England in the feudal times. Accordingly, since the attention of our antiquaries has been turned towards the metrical romances of England and Normandy, we have gained more insight into the domestic habits, language, and character of our ancestors during the dark, warlike, and romantic period of the middle ages, than Leland and Hearne were able to attain from all the dull and dreary monastic annals, which their industry collected, and their patience perused. In fact, to form a just idea of our ancient history, we cannot help thinking that these works of fancy should be read along with the labours of the professed historian. The one teaches what our ancestors thought; how they lived; upon what motives they acted, and what language they spoke; and having attained this intimate knowledge of their sentiments, manners, and habits, we are certainly better prepared to learn from the other the actual particulars of their annals. From the romance, we learn what they were; from the history, what they did; and were we to be deprived of one of these two kinds of information, it might well be made a question, which is most useful or interesting? In this point of view, we entirely lay aside the consideration which the metrical romances often claim as works of fancy, presenting to the imagination a pleasing detail of romantic adventure, and graced occasionally by poetical flights of considerable merit. With such ideas of the importance of these ancient legends of chivalry, we are bound to express our gratitude to those by whose labours they have been drawn from the dusty and chaotic confusion of public libraries, and presented to the public in a legible and attainable shape.

Bishop Percy, the venerable editor of the *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, was, we believe, the first who turned the public attention upon these forgotten hordes of antiquarian treasures, by an Essay upon Metrical Romance, prefixed to the third volume of his work, in which the merits and qualities of the poetry of chivalry are critically investigated, and a list given of such metrical romances as had come to the reverend editor's knowledge, to which we are now in capacity to make large additions. Warton followed Bishop Percy in his taste for the ancient romance, of which he was an indefatigable student. Whenever he has occasion to men-

tion a tale of chivalry, in his *History of Poetry*, it seems to operate like a spell, and he feels it impossible to proceed with the more immediate subject of his disquisition, until he has paced through the whole enchanted maze, and introduced his reader into all its labyrinths. Of the great variety of strange and anomalous digressions, with which that work abounds, and which, separately considered, possess infinite merit and curiosity, a large portion arose solely from his attachment to this romantic lore. But although the curiosity of the public was in some degree excited by the references of these ingenious and inquisitive authors to the poetry of other times, it was not easy to procure for it adequate gratification. The ancient metrical romances were very early superseded by prose works upon the same subjects. These last, although far inferior, in interest and merit, to the poetical tales which preceded them, claimed and obtained a superior degree of credit, founded upon the fiction alleged to be inseparable from metre; upon the degraded state of the minstrels, whose province it was to recite these disparaged rhyming legends; and, above all, upon a grave pretext set up by the author of each prose work, that he had translated it *verbatim et literatim* from an ancient Greek or Latin original. As no such Greek or Latin original for a romance of chivalry has ever been produced, we may be safely allowed to doubt whether any such ever existed. But our ancestors received these accounts with unhesitating credulity, and gravely read the voluminous romances of Lancelot du Lac, and Palmerin of England, as translations from ancient annals, while they rejected with scorn the rhyming legends of the minstrels on the same subjects. Thus the metrical romances were obliged to give way to the prose works, which were, in fact, borrowed from them; and so complete was the substitution of the one species of fable for the other, that the press, which was then invented about the period of this revolution in public taste, groaned under the splendid folios of the former, while the latter remained in obscure manuscripts, or were only printed in the meanest manner and for the meanest of the people. Thus the very existence of the metrical romance, as a distinct, separate, and more ancient kind of composition, was unknown and unnoticed till the publication of the works which we have mentioned. Even long after that period, printed

editions being as rare as manuscripts, remained very little disturbed by those who possessed them, and absolutely inaccessible to every other person. At length, as the taste for old ballads began to awaken that for romantic fiction, Pinkerton and others reprinted in their miscellanies some of the shorter and more ancient of our metrical tales of chivalry; and others were republished singly both in London and Edinburgh. But the first comprehensive and general work, upon this interesting subject, was undertaken by the late Mr. Ritson. No one could, in some respects, have been more admirably qualified for the task. Although it is now three years since this publication appeared, yet the subject is so intimately and immediately connected with the more popular and elegant work of Mr. Ellis, that, in reviewing the one, we think it a duty we owe the public to take some notice of the other, and at least point out to their attention the undeserved neglect into which it has fallen.

This collection contains twelve metrical romances of chivalry, selected by the editor as those which, from a general acquaintance with such compositions, he deemed most worthy of publication. There is prefixed a long and elaborate dissertation on Romance and Minstrelsy; and learned notes are subjoined to the collection, with a glossary of obsolete words.

In the important task of arranging and correcting the text of these poems, it is impossible to bestow too much praise upon the editor. To an industry incapable of fatigue, and a fidelity which defied every power of temptation, the late Mr. Ritson united acute abilities and an intimate acquaintance with every collateral source from which light could be thrown upon his subject. In possessing, therefore, a collection so important to our ancient literature, we have the satisfaction to know, that the poems published are most strictly and literally genuine, and that they are ably and clearly illustrated in the corresponding notes.

The first romance in the collection is Ywain and Gawain, a most beautiful tale of chivalry, from which Warton has given copious extracts in his History of English Poetry. It is certainly the finest romance in the work, perhaps the most interesting which now exists. It is of French origin, being written, or at least greatly enlarged, by the famous Chretien de Troye, who flourished in the twelfth century. We cannot resist giving a very short summary of the story.

Guenever, the wife of the famous Arthur, hearing, upon a time, the knights who guarded her chamber-door, telling to each other their exploits of chivalry, suddenly issues from her apartment, and commands Sir Colgrevance, who was then speaking, to continue his narration. The knight unwillingly obeys, and tells a long and mavellous adventure which had befallen him beside an enchanted well, where he had been finally discomfited by a puissant knight, the guardian of the fountain, the wonders of which are described in strong Gothic painting. Sir Ywain resolves to undertake the adventure, and, having set forth in disguise, slays in single fight the champion of the fountain, upon the threshold of his own castle gate. But the victor, enclosed in the court by the fall of the portcullis, is in the utmost danger from the followers of the slain warrior. He is rescued at length by means of Lunet, a damsel belonging to the castle, who conceals him in a chamber. Here he obtains a sight of the widow of the knight of the fountain, and falls desperately in love. His passion is at length successful, through the intervention of the damsel, who very sensibly reminds her lady, that the conqueror must needs more than make up the loss of the vanquished. Sir Ywain marries the dame, with whom he lives in great happiness, until he obtains her permission to visit the court of Arthur, pledging his knightly word to return within the year. But Sir Ywain forgot his promise, a circumstance which did not prevent his becoming distracted for the loss of his lady, when reminded of his breach of faith by a damsel whom she despatched to the court of Arthur, to renounce her husband, and proclaim him *dishonoured and truthless.* He is restored to his senses by a sage lady, whose enemies he discomfits by his prowess, and then resumes his profession of knight-errantry. While wandering in quest of adventures, he observes a lion combating a dragon, and goes to his assistance, both because the lion was the more noble animal, and on account of the ancient and irreconcilable feud betwixt knights-errant and dragons. The dragon being slain, the grateful lion attaches himself to his ally, and maintains a great part in all his future adventures. They come to the enchanted fountain, where Ywain unexpectedly meets with Lunet, the damsel to whom he had formerly been so much indebted. She is bound to find a champion against a certain day, to fight with her mistress's

false steward, who had accused her of treason. Their meeting under circumstances of mutual distress, is very happily described by the old minstrel. Sir Ywain promises to appear and defend her upon the appointed day. In the meanwhile, he is involved in a variety of adventures, from many of which he is extricated by the lion; so that the time is nearly past when he appears to combat the steward. Lunet is restored to life and liberty, and by her subsequent address, Sir Ywain is reconciled with his lady.

> And so Sir Ywaine and his wife
> In joy and bliss they led their life;
> So did Lunet and the lioun;
> Untill that death have driven them doun."

The next romance, called Launfal, though a beautiful fairy tale, might have been as well omitted, as it is published by Mr. Ellis in the notes to Way's translation of Le Grand's *Fabliaux*. We hope it was not inserted with the peevish purpose of pointing out supposed errors in Mr. Ellis's edition, although we observe some explanations of the difficult passages, given with a "*not as Mister Ellis says;*" and that in cases where the justice of the correction is as uncertain as the dispute is insignificant. The second volume contains Sir Libius Disconius, *i. e.* Le Beau Decogneu (of which Bishop Percy has given an elegant *precis* in his Essay on Metrical Romance); Hornchild, the King of Tars; Emare, and a metrical Chronicle of England. The third volume contains Florence of Rome, The Earl of Tholouse, the Squire of Low Degree, and the Knight of Courtesy and Lady of Faguell. We believe that both the Chronicle of England, and the beautiful fairy tale of Sir Orpheo, might have been greatly enlarged by recourse to the Auchinleck MS. in the Advocates' Library of Edinburgh, to which Mr. Ritson seems to have had ready access. Upon the whole, the romances are judiciously selected, and we have already praised the well known accuracy of the editor.

We cannot confer the same unmixed praise on the introductory Essay on Romance and Minstrelsy. We were, on the contrary, about to bestow our very strongest and most decided reprobation upon the acrimonious spirit of vindictive controversy in which it is written, when we were in some degree disarmed by the avowal, that it was composed under the pressure of "continued ill health and low spirits;" and by

the recollection, that the scene has been long since closed by the hand of death. But we must not, in our respect for the dead, altogether forget what is due to the living. Much coarse and insolent invective is poured on Bishop Percy, who seemes to have incurred the editor's resentment in a double capacity,—as a dignitary of the church, and a successful publisher of ancient poetry. We do not think Mr. Ritson imbibed this spirit from the works which he studied. Surely, neither the gallant Sir Lancelot, nor the courteous Sir Gawain would have given a reverend Bishop the lie direct, on account of a disputed reading in the old song of Maggie Lauder! We would have antiquaries remember, that the ridicule which their pursuits are at all times apt to incur, becomes pointed in proportion to the indecent vehemence of their argument. Whether the controverted line (which refers to the dwelling of a certain bagpiper) ought to be read, "Come ye *frae* the border," or "Live you *upo'* the border," or, finally, "Ye live *upon* the border," might surely have been debated, if indeed, it was worth debating (*num pugna est de paupere regno*), with the temper and manners of a gentleman. The frequent charge brought by Mr. Ritson against the editor of the Reliques of ancient Poetry, of adulterating, by modern improvements, the ancient poems which he published, appears to us to be urged with far too much grossness. We do not, indeed, approve of this species of sophistication, by which the man of taste is sometimes a gainer at the expense of the antiquary. But when we consider, that the Reliques were published at a time when the public taste was far from encouraging the pursuits of the mere antiquary, we wonder not that the learned editor should have been tempted to render his ancient poetry more attractive by his own elegant interpolations. And we apprehend, that as few modern publishers possess the taste and judgment of Bishop Percy, so, even those as highly gifted, want, in the present day, the apology which we have pleaded for the editor of the Reliques.

In the general scope of Mr. Ritson's Essay, we discover much both of the defects and merits which characterize his lucubrations. The accumulation of materials bears witness to the undeviating and incessant labour of an antiquary zealously employed on a favourite topic. A number of curious facts are drawn together respecting the romances of all na-

tions, but especially concerning those of England. The first part of the Essay treats of the origin of romances; and the author is particularly anxious to combat the system which deduces those fictions from the north of Europe. He produces some plausible arguments to prove that many of the Scandinavian romances were borrowed or translated from the French, and that the Edda of Sturleson has no claim to high antiquity. The author's ardour in controversy has, however, sometimes hurried him too far. Thus he informs us, when giving the history of Odin of Scandinavia, that this famous personage "attempts to kiss Rinda, daughter to the King of the Ruthes, and receives a slap on the face. According to Torfæus, he even ravished this young lady; but the passage, upon looking into Saxo, to whom he seems to refer, could not be found." (Essay, p. xxxi.) Now, we have looked into Saxo, and found the passage at great length in the Paris edition of 1514, folio xxv. In several other instances, the authority of Saxo seems to countenance the mythology of the Edda, much more than Mr. Ritson is disposed to admit. No positive opinion is given, in the Essay, upon the origin of romance, although the theories of former writers are combated with apparent success from an intimate acquaintance with authorities of the middle ages. Indeed, we have been long of opinion, that Mr. Ritson was, both by talent and disposition, better qualified to assail the opinions of others than to deduce from the facts which he produces a separate theory of his own.

In the second part of the Essay, English romance is treated of; and the author contends, with great ardour, for the superior antiquity of the French works upon that subject. Indeed, this is not surprising, when it is considered that French was not merely the court and law language of England, but was spoken universally by the nobles and gentry, from the Conquest, down to the reign of Edward III.

The third part of the Essay treats of the English minstrels, a race of men against whom Mr. Ritson seems to have entertained a special malice, and whom he anxiously blends with the jugglers, whose tricks of legerdemain formed another branch of our ancestors' amusement. Now, although it is extremely probable that the same person might occasionally practise both arts, yet, in themselves, they were separate and distinct professions. Nor do we agree with Mr. Ritson

in supposing that the minstrels, whose profession was music and the recitation of poetry, were not frequently themselves poets. Their daily bread depended upon their stock of tales and songs; and it must have been as natural for them to have composed the romances which they sung, as for a modern musician to compose the pieces which he performs. Above all, we cannot see why the arts of composition, which are admitted to have been exercised by the minstrels of France, should be supposed to be unattainable by those of England. Subsequent to the reign of Edward III, most of the popular French romances were translated into English, which then became the language, as well of the nobles as of the vulgar. Why the minstrels, who were thus interested in these translations, should be deemed unequal to the task of accomplishing them, we can see no good reason for believing. A wandering and idle race of men, attendant on the barons who went to war in France, they had time to acquire both languages; and the art of rhyming must have been easy to persons who almost every day of their lives were employed in poetical recitation. Minstrels and bards are often employed as synonymous terms, although the poetic powers of the bards are indisputable. As late as the reign of Queen Elizabeth, this combination occurs in the poem of a Scottish satirist describing London.

> "Bot yet the *menstrallis and the bairdis,*
> Thair trowand to obtain rewardis,
> About his ludgene loudlie played."
> *Legend of the Bishop of St. Androis.*

A proof how far the task of the poet and of the reciter were required from the minstrel, occurs in a very ancient poem, of which there is one MS. in the British Museum, and another in the library of Peterborough cathedral. It contains the history of an intrigue betwixt Thomas of Erceldoune, called the Rhymer, and the Queen of Fairies, by whom, as every one knows, he was transported to the "Londe of Faeri," and gifted with those supernatural powers of poetry and prophecy by which he was afterwards distinguished. The following dialogue passes betwixt the bard and his faery leman upon this memorable occasion.

> "'Fare wel, Thomas, I wend my way,
> I may no longer stande with the.'—
> 'Gif me sum tokyn, Lady gaye,
> That I may say I spake with the.'—

"'To harp and carpe, Thomas, wher so ever ze gon,
Thomas, take the these with the.'—
'*Harping*,' *he said*, '*ken I non*,
For tong is chefe of mynstralcie.'—

"'If thu wil spelle, or talys telle,
Thomas thu shall never make lye;
Wher so ever thu goo, to fryth or felle,
I pray thu speke never non ille of me.'"

From this decisive declaration, which a poet and minstrel made on the nature of his own profession, it appears plainly, that, in more ancient times, the minstrel's principal and most honourable occupation referred to poetry rather than music; and the Rhymer might have been justly described as one "who united the arts of poetry and music, and sung verses to the harp of his own composing," if he had not disdained the musical skill to which it was Mr. Ritson's persuasion that the talents of the minstrel were exclusively limited. We should have been anxious to have heard what reply his keen and eager spirit could have suggested; but poor Ritson is now probably deciphering the characters upon the collar of Cerberus, or conversing in unbaptized language with the Saxon and British chiefs of former times;

"With Oswald,
Vortigern, Harold, Hengist, Horsa, Knute,
Allured, Edgar and Cunobeline."

Upon the whole, it occurs to us, from a careful perusal of his Essay, that Mr. Ritson's talents were better adapted to research than to deduction, to attack than to defence, to criticism than to composition; and that he has left us a monument of profound industry and extensive study, undirected by any attempt at system, and tarnished by the splenetic peculiarities of an irritable temperament. Still let it be remembered to his honour, that, without the encouragement of private patronage, or of public applause; without hopes of gain, and under the certainty of severe critical censure, he has brought forward such a work on national antiquities, as in other countries has been thought worthy of the labour of universities, and the countenance of princes.

The work of Mr. Ellis is of a nature adapted for general circulation, and for conveying a lively and pleasing picture of the contents of the ancient metrical romances, without literal transcription of their whole contents. With this

view, the editor has analyzed each romance in prose, introducing, at the same time, occasionally, as a continuation of the narrative, such parts of the original as seemed to possess either peculiarities of expression or poetical beauty, sufficient to render their preservation desirable, as fair or favourable specimens of the whole composition. In transcribing these selected passages, Mr. Ellis has discarded the antique orthography, preserving, however, carefully, every ancient word, while he reduces the spelling to the modern standard, according to the mode adopted in his previous publication, entitled, "Specimens of Ancient English Poetry."

Such is the plan of the present work. It is obvious, that by adopting it, Mr. Ellis voluntarily resigned the object of Mr. Ritson's publication, who gave his romances entire to the world; a mode more acceptable, doubtless, to the antiquary, though infinitely less interesting and amusing to the general reader, as well as to the editor. We have no doubt that some more severe student of our national antiquities may censure the liberties which Mr. Ellis has taken with his materials, and deprecate his scouring the shield of ancient chivalry. But, with great reverence for such grave judges, we presume to think, that the shield may be safely scoured, where there is no danger of its being proved, in the process of purification, to be no antique buckler, but a barber's basin, or a paltry old sconce. This is far from being the case in the present instance. The burnishing of the armour has only tended to ascertain the valuable materials of which it is sometimes composed, and which were heretofore obscured by cobwebs and rust. So far are we from thinking that the popular labours of Mr. Ellis will supersede a complete edition of these curious legends, that, we doubt not, the wit and elegance with which he has abridged and analyzed their contents, will encourage many a gentle reader to attempt the originals, who would before have as soon thought of wearing the dress, as of studying the poems of his ancestors. Socrates is said to have brought philosophy from heaven to reside among men; and Addison claimed the merit of introducing her to the tea-tables of the ladies. Mr. Ellis, in his turn, has brought the minstrels of old into the *boudoirs* and drawing-rooms, which have replaced the sounding halls and tapestried bowers in which

they were once familiar; so that the age of chivalry, instead of being at an end for ever, may perhaps be on the point of revival. In this point of view, much is gained and nothing lost by the plan of Mr. Ellis. Those whom an abridgement cannot satisfy, may consult the originals with more convenience and facility, from a previous knowledge of their contents, and of the libraries where they exist, while curiosity is excited in others who would never otherwise have thought on the subject. This general interest may perhaps end in a complete edition of all that old bards

> "In sage and solemn times have sung,
> Of turneys and of trophies hung;
> Of forests and enchantments drear,
> Where more is meant than meets the ear."

To the Romances, Mr. Ellis has prefixed an introduction, which contains a more plain and comprehensive view of the rise and progress of the minstrels and their poetry, than we ever remember to have met with. As the subject is curious, we will endeavour to give the reader a short statement of their history, with such remarks as occur to us.

Normandy appears to have been the cradle of minstrelsy. The Northmen who wrested that province from the feeble successors of Charlemagne, had, doubtless, like all other barbarous people, especially the Scandinavian tribes, their national poets, under the name of scalds, or by whatever other term they were distinguished. On their settling in Neustria, their native speech speedily melted down into the more commodious and extended language used by the inhabitants of Northern France, which was called *Romance*, being, in fact, a corrupted Latin, introduced by the Romans into their Gallic province. In this language, the minstrels composed most of their works, until, from that circumstance, the word romance, from signifying the early Norman French, came at length to mean those chivalrous tales usually composed in that tongue. Of the authors of these compositions, Mr. Ellis has given us the following concise, but excellent account.

"The following may perhaps be accepted as a tolerable summary of the history of the minstrels. It appears likely that they were carried by Rollo into France, where they probably introduced a certain number of their native traditions; those, for instance, relating to Ogier le Danois, and other northern heroes,

who were afterwards enlisted into the tales of chivalry; but that, being deprived of the mythology of their original religion, and cramped perhaps, as well by the sober spirit of Christianity, as by the imperfection of a language whose tameness was utterly inapplicable to the sublime obscurity of their native poetry, they were obliged to adopt various modes of amusing, and to unite the talents of the mimic and the juggler, as a compensation for the defects of the musician and poet. Their musical skill, however, if we may judge from the number of their instruments, of which very formidable catalogues are to be found in every description of a royal festival, may not have been contemptible; and their poetry, even though confined to short compositions, was not likely to be void of interest to their hearers, while employed on the topics of flattery or satire. Their rewards were certainly, in some cases, enormous, and prove the esteem in which they were held; though this may be partly ascribed to the general thirst after amusement, and the difficulty experienced by the great in dissipating the tediousness of life; so that the gift of three parishes in Gloucestershire, assigned by William the Conqueror for the support of his *joculator*, may perhaps be a less accurate measure of the minstrel's accomplishments, than of the monarch's power and of the insipidity of his court.

"To the talents already enumerated, the minstrels added, soon after the birth of French literature, the important occupation of the *diseur* or *declaimer*. Perhaps, the declamation of metrical compositions might have required, during their first state of imperfection, some kind of chant, and even the assistance of some musical instruments, to supply the deficiencies of the measure; perhaps the aids of gesture and pantomime may have been necessary to relieve the monotony of a long recitation; but at all events it is evident, that an author who wrote for the public at large, during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, was not less dependent for his success on the minstrels, than a modern writer of tragedy or comedy on the players of the present day. A copyist might multiply manuscripts for the supply of convent-libraries! but while ecclesiastics alone were able to read, there was no access to the ears of a military nobility, without the intervention of a body of men who travelled in every direction, and who were everywhere welcomed as the promoters of mirth and conviviality.

"The next step was easy. Being compelled to a frequent exercise of their talent in extemporaneous compositions, the minstrels were probably, like the *improvisatori* of Italy, at least equal, if not superior to more learned writers, in the merely mechanical parts of poetry; they were also better judges of the public taste. By the progress of translation they became the depositaries of nearly all the knowledge of the age, which was committed to their memory: it was natural, therefore, that they should form a variety of new combinations from the numerous materials in their possession; and it will be shown hereafter, that many of our most popular romances were most probably brought by their efforts to the state in which we now see them. This was the most splendid era of their history, and seems to have comprehended the latter part of the twelfth, and perhaps the whole of the thirteenth cen-

tury. After that time, from the general progress of instruction, the number of readers began to increase; and the metrical romances were insensibly supplanted by romances in prose, whose monotony neither required nor could derive much assistance from the art of declamation. The visits of the minstrels had been only periodical, and generally confined to the great festivals of the year; but the resources, such as they were, of the ponderous prose legend were always accessible. Thus began the decline of a body of men, whose complete degradation seems to have been the subsequent result of their own vices. During the period of their success they had most impudently abused the credulity of the public; but it is a whimsical fact, that the same fables which were discredited, while in verse, were again, on their transfusion into prose, received without suspicion. It should seem that falsehood is generally safe from detection, when concealed under a sufficient cloak of dulness"—Ellis, i, p. 19-23.

By attending to this history, we may easily solve the difficulty which Ritson found in reconciling the degraded state of the minstrels to the high rewards and countenance which they sometimes received, even in preference to those of the clerical profession. It appears, on one occasion, that two mendicant friars, soliciting hospitality at the gate of a convent, were received with acclamation under the idea of their being minstrels, and kicked out again when they announced their real character. It is also proved, we believe, that one minstrel received four shillings for his performance, and six priests only sixpence at the same festival.* But such instances of extravagant reward to individuals of a class which dedicates personal exertions to public amusement, are consistent with the general disrespect to which this body in general is condemned. Individual instances excepted, the player and the musician of modern days, the genuine successors of the minstrels, incur a certain degree of contempt from their situation, which they are too often driven to merit. It is somewhat hard that, as society advances in civilization, and as demands are made on this class of men for refinement and improvement in their respective arts, their seclusion from the society where that refinement is to be acquired, becomes proportionally more rigid and strict. We cannot stop to appreciate the moral causes of the fasti-

* This is no doubt quite consistent with modern manners, as may appear, by considering, whether young Roscius or a Welsh curate is best paid, and to which the gates of an episcopal palace would fly most speedily open.

dious harshness with which society requites those on whom it depends for its most exquisite amusements.

Having shortly traced the history of the minstrels, Mr. Ellis proceeds to examine the progress of their compositions. Of these, as we have already hinted, the first seem to have been unadorned annals or histories, reduced to measure for the convenience of the reciter, who was to retain them upon his memory. This field, however, soon became too barren and uninteresting. Other sources of narration were sought for. Some occurred in the ancient songs of the scalds, the legitimate productions of the minstrels. Others, of Arabian origin, found their way to France through Spain. But a much more numerous class was derived from the tales of the Armoricans, the neighbours of the Normans, who derived themselves from a Welsh colony. From this source, the minstrels probably drew their first accounts of

> "What resounds
> In fable or romance of Uther's son,
> Begirt with British and Armoric knights."

This theme, however, acquired its chief popularity after the acquisition of England by William the Conqueror. It is now completely proved, that the earliest and best French romances were composed for the meridian of the English court, where that language continued to be exclusively used, at least till the time of Edward III. When the Norman race of monarchs had once secured themselves on the throne of England, and identified the honour of that country with their own, they began to feel an interest in its early history, and to listen with applause to the feats of its heroes. The legends of the Welsh on these occasions, were much more acceptable than those of the Saxons. The latter were the people whom the Normans had conquered, and whose kings they had dispossessed; the praise, therefore, of their departed heroes revived sentiments of discord, better forgotten by all parties. But the exploits of the British were carried back to so ancient a period, and so intermingled with Celtic fable, that they recalled no sentiments of ancient independence, and suggested no ideas dangerous to the Norman race. The exploits of Arthur were therefore unanimously adopted, as the subject of tales and romances without end; and these were drawn by the Norman minstrels from the British traditions flowing from Wales, and floating

in what had lately been the British kingdom of Cumberland; but especially from the works of Geoffrey of Monmouth. Mr. Ellis gives us an abridgement of that author's Chronicle of Britain, and his *Vita Merlini*, a poem in Latin verse. This last work only exists in MS., which is much to be regretted, as, from very frequent reference to particulars of British story, it affords demonstrable evidence, that Geoffrey did not, as has been repeatedly affirmed, himself forge the incidents of his Chronicle, but really drew them from the Armorican Chronicle, put into his hands by Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford. The whole tissue of fables, therefore, concerning Arthur, which compose the most striking part of Geoffrey's history, and indeed the history itself, seem, in the words of our author, to be less a sudden fabrication, the work of any one man's invention, than "a superstructure gradually and progressively raised on the foundation of the history attributed to Nennius," the purity of which, by the way, had been already sullied by the Monk Samuel. Mr. Ellis next proceeds to show that the state of Wales, during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, was favourable to an exchange of literary materials betwixt the bards of that country and the Norman minstrels, as well as between the former and their brethren of Armorica.

"But as there is reason to believe that the British lays were seldom if ever committed to writing, it might be expected that different minstrels would tell the same story with some variations; that, unable to retain in their memory the whole of a long narrative, they would carry off, in the first instance, detached adventures, which they would afterwards connect as well as they were able; and that a system of traditional history, thus imperfectly preserved through the medium of a very loose translation, and already involved in much geographical and chronological confusion, would assume the fabulous appearance which we find in the French narratives called romances."—Vol. i, p. 117.

To conclude his account of the materials from whence English romance was drawn, the editor observes, that although we owe to the Norman minstrels the greater part of the romances now extant, which were avowedly translated into English as soon as that language came to supersede the French; yet a small number were most probably originally composed in English for the use of the Scottish court, where French was never exclusively spoken, and afterwards imitated or translated by French minstrels. On this subject he gives an elegant summary of the system proposed by

the editor of Sir Tristrem, which we had occasion to consider in our review of that volume.* Upon this hypothesis, it is curious to observe, that as the earliest French romances were written in England, so the earliest English romances were composed in Scotland.

We heartily wish Mr. Ellis had continued his dissertation on the materials of our metrical romance to a later period, as we have not seen a more clear and comprehensive view of the subject, so far as it goes. This desideratum is, however, in part supplied by the arrangement of his romances into classes, with the general preliminary remarks upon each class. The appendix to the introduction contains an account of Petrus Alphonsus *de clericali disciplina*, by Mr. Douce, an industrious and ingenious antiquary; and, secondly, a translation by Mr. Ellis of the Breton lais of Marie, twelve in number, exhibiting much of that genius for romantic fiction, which has been always an attribute of the Celtic tribes. We would willingly extract one of them for our readers' amusement; but are obliged to hasten to the metrical romances, which are the principal object of the collection.

The first class comprehends romances relating to King Arthur. These, as we have already seen, are probably the earliest in order, and although once most popular and numerous, are now become, in their metrical shape, exceedingly rare; because their very popularity rendered them the first objects of imitation to the prose authors, whose works superseded those of the minstrels. One romance of formidable length has been still preserved in MS., and forms the first article of Mr. Ellis's work. It is called Merlin and Arthur, and resumes the account of these worthies, from their birth to the marriage of Arthur, when the transcriber of one fragment resigned his task, after having copied 10,000 lines. This is a romance in the very best style of minstrelsy, so far as language, and even incident, are concerned. The marvellous birth of Merlin, surreptitiously begotten by a fiend upon a maiden, under the most extraordinary circumstances, is one of those feats of witchery which arrest the imagination. The mother is condemned to death by a rigid law of the British against such as infringed the rules of chastity. But Blaise, a holy hermit, by christening the

* [In the *Edinburgh Review*, vol. iv.—The criticism referred to was written by Mr. Ellis.]

child at the instant of its birth, baffles the hopes of the devil, who had expected, by means of engendering with a virgin, to create a semi-demon, who should be devoted to the powers of evil.

"The good man then returned with his infernal proselyte, and restored him by means of the basket to the midwife; who, carrying him to the fire, and surveying his rough hide with horror and astonishment, could not refrain from reproaching him for his unreasonable choice of a mother who had never taken the usual means to have a child.

"'Alas,' she said, art thou Merlin?
*Whether** art thou? and of what kin? * *Whence.*
Who was thy father, by night or day,
That no man wite ne may?
It is great ruth, thou foul thing,
That for thy love, (by Heaven's King!)
Thy mother shall be slain with woe!
Alas that *staund** it shall fall so! * *Time.*
I would thou were far in the sea,
With that thy mother might scape free!'
When that he heard her speak so,
He *brayed** up his eyen two, * *Raised suddenly—with a start.*
And *lodly** on her gan look, * *Loathingly.*
And his head on her he shook,
And gan to cry with loud din;
'Thou lyest!' he said, 'old quean!
My mother shall no man *quell*,* * *Kill.*
For no thing that man may tell,
While that I may stand or gon!
Maugré hem every one
I shall save her life for this.
That thou shalt hear and see, ywis.'" Vol. i, p. 213, 214.

We have no time to stop to trace the completion of this promise, nor the rest of Arthur's history, which Mr. Ellis has taken from a poetical account of his achievements and death, occurring in the Museum. The downfall of the chivalry of the Round Table was completed by the death of Sir Lancelot, its most redoubted supporter. Mr Ellis transcribes from the Morte Arthur the following eulogium over that hero, which may be said to comprehend the cardinal virtues of a *preux* chevalier.

"And now I dare say—that Sir Lancelot, ther thou lyest, thou were never matched of none earthly knight's hands. And thou were the curteist knight that ever bare shielde. And thou were the truest freende to thy lover that ever bestrode horse. And thou were the truest lover of a synful man, that ever loved woman. And thou were the kindest man that ever stroke with swerde. And thou were the goodliest person that ever came amonge prece

(press) of knyghtes. And thou were the meekest man and the gentillest that ever eate in hal among ladies. And thou were the sternest knight to thy mortall foe that ever put spere in the rest!" —Vol. i, p. 386, 387.

The next class comprehends what Mr. Ellis has ventured to call Saxon Romances; that is, romances referring to Saxon subjects, and claiming, perhaps, some foundation in the history of that people. Horn-Child, which bears the most decided marks of Saxon origin, is omitted, as already published by Mr. Ritson, in an entire state; but we could have wished Mr. Ellis had extended his criticism to that poem, or favoured us with some general remarks upon the romance of the Anglo-Saxons. Guy of Warwick, and Bevis of Hamptoun, occupy this station entirely. The first is a very long romance, and in general as dull as may be, with even more than the usual huge proportion of battles and tournaments. Yet it may be read with pleasure in Mr. Ellis's abridgement, though the original would have defied the patience of most antiquaries. The combat betwixt Guy and Colbrond the Danish champion, is told in a more animated strain, and in a different stanza. We suspect that this is the only part of the romance which has any claim to a Saxon origin, and that all the rest has been added by some minstrel after the crusades. Mr. Ellis seems disposed to identify the redoubted Sir Guy with Egils a Norwegian pirate, who assisted Athelstan at the battle of Brunnanburgh. The Egils-saga, which contains an account of that chief's adventures, affords no countenance to this conjecture, which we incline to consider as fanciful. Bevis of Hamptoun resembles Guy of Warwick, but is of a far ruder and apparently more ancient manufacture. There is a harshness and barbarous tinge about this poem, which bespeaks its being composed in a very rude state of society, or for the amusement of the lower ranks; two points which it is sometimes very difficult to distinguish. Notwithstanding their demerits, Guy of Warwick, and Bevis of Hamptoun, equalled, or excelled in popularity, almost all the romances of the middle ages.

The next is entitled an Anglo-Norman Romance, and contains the adventures of no less a person than Richard Cœur de Lion. It has for many reasons, great claims on our attention. In the first place, it tends to show the pro-

gress from metrical history to metrical romance; for, in its more ancient and simple state, as a fragment still exists in the Auchinleck Manuscript, it appears to have contained little more than an historical detail, not much exaggerated, of the actual transactions of Richard in the Holy Land. But the inventions of succeeding minstrels have grafted upon the original narrative a number of extraordinary and supernatural events of the wildest and most romantic kind, in order to render it more astonishing or interesting to their hearers. There is, in particular, a minute account of a marriage betwixt Henry II and an unknown Princess, by whom he had three children, namely, Richard, John, and a daughter unknown to our genealogists, called Topyas. This queen of England being a fiend, or something very little better, was unable to be present at any of the sacraments; and being once compelled to remain till the elevation of the host took place, she made an elopement through the roof of the chapel, carrying with her Topyas and John. The latter fell from the air, and broke his thigh bone; the mother escaped with the former, and was never more seen. The legend thus engrafted upon the English history, is taken from an event said to have happened to Count Fulk of Anjou, often alluded to by our Scottish historians as a proof, that, by one side of the house, the kings of England were descended from the devil. Perhaps, however, the minstrel hinted a satire at Eleanor of Guienne, who was, in fact, a sort of devil incarnate. Of this fiendish parentage, according to the romance, came that

> " King y-christened of most renown,
> Strong Richard Cœur de Lioun."

The feat by which he gained this well-known appellation is supposed to have happened during his confinement in the Austrian dominions, where he slew the Emperor's son by a box on the ear. The Emperor having scruples to accomblish his revenge, by dipping his hands in the royal blood of his prisoner, contented himself with introducing into Richard's company a hungry lion, under the conviction that he was guiltless of all consequences which might ensue from their meeting. Richard, who had armed his hand with a few ells of handkerchiefs, the gift of a loving princess, plunged it down the throat of the monster, tore out his heart, devoured

it before the face of the Emperor, and thus acquired an ample title to the name by which he is known in history. Amid this wild farrago, there occurs a minute incident of truth, which has escaped our historians. It seems pretty clear that Richard, while travelling in disguise through Austria, amused himself with dressing his own dinner, with some assistance from Sir Foulk Doyley and Sir Thomas Multon (the ancestors of the Dacres of Dacre). While these three warriors were busied in roasting a goose, they were teazed by an intrusive female minstrel, whom they rudely dismissed, without allowing her to share their good cheer. In consequence, she betrayed them to the Duke of Austria. This strange anecdote is alluded to by Petrus d'Elrilo, a writer of the twelfth century, and by Otho de Saint Blaise, who maintains, that Richard himself turned the spit, forgetful that he wore a ring which announced the rank of the wearer to be far superior to his occupation. So strangely are truth and falsehood woven together in this curious performance. But this romance is also valuable, as a curious example of the change for the worse which the religious wars introduced into the European character. In the earlier romances, the heroes are no doubt sufficiently savage; they shed much blood in battle, and are determined enemies to giants and wizards. But the cause of these military exertions is generally one with which we can sympathize; the deliverance of a fair lady, the righting of a wrong done to the helpless, or the supporting the tottering throne of a monarch. A certain generosity is also mingled in their valour; and they are generally as ready to forgive and spare the vanquished, as to quell the vaunting and resisting enemy. But the crusader discarded from his bosom all that was amiable and mild in the spirit of chivalry. He fought for the cause of God against unchristian heathen hounds, and had neither authority nor inclination to forgive their wrongs to Heaven, as he might have pardoned those offered to himself. This romance contains a lively detail of the bloody cruelties practised by the champions of Palestine upon an enemy. The following extraordinary specimen of what crusaders were supposed capable of performing, although totally fabulous, shows the idea which the minstrels conceived of such a cha-

racter, when carried to the highest and most laudable degree of perfection:—

"The best leeches in the camp were unable to effect the cure of Richard's ague; but the prayers of the army were more successful. He became convalescent; and the first symptom of his recovery was a violent longing for pork. But pork was not likely to be plentiful in a country whose inhabitants had an abhorrence for swine's flesh.

"An old knight, with Richard biding,
When he heard of that tiding,
That the kingis wants were swyche,
To the steward he spake privyliche.
'Our lord the king sore is sick, I wis,
After pork he alonged is;
Ye may find none to selle:
No man be hardy him so to telle!
If he did, he might die.
Now behoves to done as I shall say,
That he wete nought of that.
Takes a Saracen young and fat;
In haste let the thief be slain,
Opened, and his skin off flayn;
And sodden, full hastily,
With powder, and with spicery,
And with saffron of good coloùr.
When the king feels thereof savoùr,
Out of ague if he be went,
He shall have thereto good talènt.
When he has a good taste,
And eaten well a good repast,
And supped of the *brewis** a sup, * *Broth.*
Slept after, and swet a drop,
Thorough Goddis help, and my counsail,
Soon he shall be fresh and hail.'
The sooth to say, at wordes few,
Slain and sodden was the heathen shrew.
Before the king it was forth brought:
Quod his men, 'Lord, we have pork sought;
Eates and suppes of the brewis *soote*,* * *Sweet.*
Thorough grace of God it shall be your boot.'
Before king Richard carff a knight.
He ate faster than he carved might.
The king ate the flesh, and *gnew** the bones, * *Gnawed.*
And drank well after for the nonce.
And when he had eaten enough,
His folk hem turned away, and *lough*.* * *Laughed.*
He lay still, and drew in his arm;
His chamberlain him wrapped warm.
He lay and slept, and swet a stound,
And became whole and sound.
King Richard clad him, and arose,
And walked abouten in the close."—Vol. ii, p. 225–227.

Shortly after this horrible banquet, the Christian camp is attacked. Richard flies to repulse the invaders, succeeds, and returns, wearied with slaughter, to his tent.

> " A knight his arms gan unlace;
> Him to comfort and solace,
> Him was brought a sop in wine.
> 'The head of that ilke swine,
> That I of ate! (the cook he bade)
> For feeble I am, and faint and mad.'
> Quod the cook, 'That head I ne have.'
> Then said the king, 'So God me save,
> But I see the head of that swine,
> For sooth, thou shalt lessen thine!'
> The cook saw none other might be;
> He fet the head, and let him see."
> " The *swarte vis** when the king seeth,
> His black beard, and white teeth;
> How his lippes grinned wide,
> 'What devil is this?' the king cried,
> And gan to laugh as he were wode.
> 'What? is Saracen's flesh thus good?
> For hunger ere I be wo,
> I and my folk shall eat mo.'"—Vol. ii, p. 228, 229.

* *Black face.*

Soon after this incident, Saladin despatches an embassy to Richard to solicit the ransom of the garrison of Acres, including several persons of high rank, who, with the city, had fallen into the hands of the Christians. Richard receives the ambassadors courteously, and requests their company to dinner.

" The invitation was gratefully accepted. Richard in the mean time gave secret orders to his marshal that he should repair to the prison, select a certain number of the most distinguished captives, and after carefully noting their names on a roll of parchment, cause their heads to be instantly struck off; that these heads should be delivered to the cook, with instructions to clear away the hair, and, after boiling them in a caldron, to distribute them on several platters, one to each guest, observing to fasten on the forehead of each the piece of parchment expressing the name and family of the victim.

" This horrible order was punctually executed. At noon the guests were summoned to wash by the music of the waits; the king took his seat, attended by the principal officers of his court, at the high table, and the rest of the company were marshalled at a long table below him. On the cloth were placed portions of salt at the usual distances, but neither bread, wine, nor water. The ambassadors, rather surprised at this omission, but still free from apprehension, awaited in silence the arrival of the dinner, which was announced by the sound of pipes, trumpets, and tabours; and beheld, with horror and dismay, the unnatural banquet introduced

by the steward and his officers. Yet their sentiments of disgust and abhorrence, and even their fears, were for a time suspended by their curiosity. Their eyes were fixed on the king, who, without the slightest change of countenance, swallowed the morsels as fast as they could be supplied by the knight who carved them.

"Their attention was then involuntarily fixed on the smoking heads before them; they traced in the swoln and distorted features the resemblance of a friend or near relation; and received from the fatal scroll which accompanied each dish the sad assurance that this resemblance was not imaginary. They sat in torpid silence, anticipating their own fate in that of their countrymen; while their ferocious entertainer, with fury in his eyes, but with courtesy on his lips, insulted them by frequent invitations to merriment. At length this first course was removed, and its place supplied by venison, cranes, and other dainties, accompanied by the richest wines. The king then apologized to them for what had passed, which he attributed to his ignorance of their taste; and assured them of his religious respect for their character as ambassadors, and of his readiness to grant them a safe conduct for their return. This boon was all that they now wished to claim; and

"King Richard spake to an old man,
'Wendes home to your soudan!
Say him, it shall nought him avail,
Though he for-bar us our vitail,
Bread, wine, fish, flesh, salmon, and conger;
Of us none shall die with hunger,
King Richard shall warrant,
There is no flesh so nourissant
Unto an English man,
Partridge, plover, heron, ne swan,
Cow ne ox, sheep ne swine,
As the head of a Sarezyn.
There he is fat, and thereto tender;
And my men be lean and slender.'"

Vol. ii, p. 232–6.

The other exploits of King Richard in the Holy Land were in a similar taste with this cannibal entertainment; and we are of opinion, that when such feats are imputed by way of praise and merit to the hero of the crusaders, and received, as doubtless they were, with no small applause by the audience, the fact will go a great way to ascertain, whether the European character was improved or debased by these Eastern expeditions.

The next class of Romances comprehend such as relate to Charlemagne and his Paladins. These are founded on the chronicle of the Pseudo-Turpin, a collection of fables not very dissimilar to those brought together by Geoffrey of Monmouth, and which, like his chronicle, has become the

source of innumerable romances. But they never seem to have been equally popular in England; nor, indeed, could it be expected, as the scene is usually laid in France, Spain, or Italy. The Italians, from the days of Pulci to those of Ariosto, and much later, have had very many poems founded on this basis. The romances which Mr. Ellis has given us under this class are three—Roland and Ferragus, Sir Otuel, and Sir Ferumbras.

The next romance is of Oriental origin, being the earliest edition of the Seven Wise Masters, long known among the school-boys of this country. It is followed by ten miscellaneous romances:—Florice and Blancheflour; Robert of Cysille; Sir Isumbras; Sir Triamour; Ipomydon; Eglamour of Artois; Layle Fraine; Sir Eger and Sir Grahame; Roswal and Lillian; and Amys and Amylion;—all tales of doughty knights and ladies fair, once in high renown among the courtly and the gallant, but now condemned to an obscurity which, in some respects, is as undeserved as their original supereminent reputation.

It would far exceed our limits, upon which we have already somewhat trespassed, to give a complete character of the ancient metrical romances. Their importance, in a historical point of view, we have already noticed. They hold out to us, like Shakspeare's players, the abstract and brief chronicles of the time, and demand the serious consideration of every historian. Even in a literary point of view, their merit is not contemptible. It is true, the story is generally rambling and desultory, utterly incapable consequently of exciting the pleasure arising from a well-conducted plan, all the parts of which depend upon each other, and tend, each in due degree, to bring on the catastrophe. So far is this from being the case, that in a long romance, the adventures usually are all separated and insulated; only connected with each other, by their having happened to the same hero, just as a necklace of beads is combined by the thread on which they are strung. This arrangement, in fact, best suited the reciters, whose narration was to be proportioned to the time and patience of their audience; and whom this loose structure of story permitted to use freedom of compression or dilatation as best suited their purpose, since any single adventure might be inserted without impropriety, or left out without being missed. The same cause accounts for the loose and

often tedious style in which the minstrels indulged. It was of consequence that their stanza should be so simple, as to be easily recollected, and their diction so copious, as not to suffer by any occasional deficiency of memory. For these reasons, Robert de Brunne tells us, that the common minstrels were unable to repeat tales written in a concise style and complicated stanza, and that such became *nought* in their imperfect recitation. To these faults, we have often to add those of extreme awkwardness of contrivance and improbability of incident; but which neither offended the taste, nor shocked the faith of our plain and hardy ancestors. On the other hand, there is a sort of *keeping* in these ancient tales, which did not depend upon the minstrel's inclination, and from which he could not have departed, if he had a mind to do so. This arises from his painting the manners of his own time as they passed before his eyes, and thus giving a truth and unity to the chivalrous events he relates, which the modern labourers in the vineyard of romance are utterly unable to imitate. With all the pains these last can use to deck their champions in the antique taste, they are perpetually confounding the past time with the present, and are guilty of anachronisms almost as gross as his who introduced a tea-table scene into the history of John of Gaunt. Neither is the lauguage in which these legends are told altogether unworthy of our applause. There often occur passages, which, from the spirit of the poet rising with the situation, may justly claim a rank among the higher and more masculine orders of poetry. And although, as we have already noticed, the general conduct of the story is desultory and slightly put together, yet many of the individual adventures, of which each long romance is composed, are happily conceived and artfully executed. The gloom of superstition likewise added a wild and dismal effect to the wonders of the minstrel; and occasionally his description of supernatural events amounts nearly to sublimity.

To these ancient monuments of the past ages, Mr. Ellis has rendered the same good service in English, which the Count de Tressan performed in France, by the *Corps d'Extraits de Romans de Chevalerie.* In some respects, the works resemble each other considerably. They are both executed by men of rank and fashion, who formed their style not merely by perusing the best authors, but by frequenting the

first company in their respective countries. Both display an acute sense of the ludicrous, and can readily enliven, by a witty turn or lively expression, the dull or absurd details which they are occasionally obliged to narrate. We question, however, whether this is not sometimes too much indulged by both authors, since such license, when frequently taken, is rather irreverent, and looks as if the jest were levelled at once against the reader, the editor, and the original minstrel. In other respects, Mr. Ellis has a decided superiority over Mons. de Tressan. He is infinitely more faithful as an editor; and, as an author, exhibits much deeper research; which appears from his having chosen the metrical romances for his subject: whereas the count has confined his attention to those in prose, though far less ancient, and in every respect less interesting. But Mr. Ellis's introduction sufficiently illustrates his superior skill as an antiquary, although he has brought forward fewer materials than Mr. Ritson, and makes no parade of those which he has acquired: it is evidently because he wished to be an architect, not a mere collector of stones and rubbish. Everything which he quotes is adapted to fill a place in his system; and thus he avoids the great error of antiquaries, who are too much busied with insulated facts, to present to their readers a connected historical view of the subject under discussion.

Notwithstanding this ingenious and lively publication, we still desire even the more to see a genuine edition of these ancient poems. It is painful to reflect, that they, with many unedited chronicles, the materials of our national history, are lying unhonoured and unconsulted amid the rubbish of large libraries.

GODWIN'S LIFE OF CHAUCER.*

[Edinburg Review, 1804.]

The perusal of this title excited no small surprise in our critical fraternity. The authenticated passages of Chaucer's life may be comprised in half a dozen pages; and behold two voluminous quartos! The more sanguine of our number anticipated the recovery of the "Boke of the Lioun," and the other long lost labours of Adam Scrivenere, the bard's amanuensis; the more cautious predicted a new edition of the Chest of Rowley, and the Skakspeare cabinet of Ireland. Our expectations were yet farther heightened, by the lofty tone in which Mr. Godwin contrasts his own labours and discoveries with those of the former biographers of Chaucer. Tyrwhitt, the learned and indefatigable editor of the Canterbury Tales, had professed himself unable to produce more than a short abstract of the historical passages of the poet's life; and Ellis, the elegant historian of our early poetry, has (to use his own words) "followed Tyrwhitt, in reciting a few genuine anecdotes, instead of attempting to work them into a connected narrative, in which much must have been supplied by mere conjecture, or by a forced interpretation of the allusions scattered through the works of the poet." But Mr. Godwin censures this resolution, as having been adopted to save the fatigue of minute research after the documents from which a full and formal life of Chaucer might have been compiled.

"The fact is, however, that Tyrwhitt made no exertions as to the history of the poet, but contented himself with examining what other biographers had related, and adding a few memorandums,

* *On the Life of* Geoffrey Chaucer, *the early English Poet; including Memoirs of his near Friend and Kinsman,* John of Gaunt, *Duke of Lancaster; with Sketches of the Manners, Opinions, Arts, and Literature of England in the* 14*th century.* By William Godwin. 2 vols. 4to. London, 1803.

taken from Rymer's Manuscript Collections, now in the British Museum. He has not, in a single instance, resorted to the national repositories in which our records are preserved. In this *sort of* labour I had been indefatigable, and I have many obligations to acknowledge to the politeness and liberality of the persons to whose custody these monuments are confided. I encountered, indeed, no obstacle, whenever I had occasion to direct my inquiries among the different offices of government. After all my diligence, however, I am by no means confident that I may not have left some particulars to be gleaned by the compilers who shall come after me."—Preface, p. xii.

After this heavy imputation upon a former editor, to whose industry and labours Chaucer is chiefly indebted for the revival of his fame; after the grave self-congratulation of the biographer; his thanks to those who aided, or did not impede his researches; and his modest apprehensions that, notwithstanding all his diligence, some gleanings may remain for future compilers;—the reader will learn with admiration that Mr. William Godwin's two quarto volumes contain hardly the vestige of an authenticated fact concerning Chaucer, which is not to be found in the eight pages of Messrs Thomas Tyrwhitt and George Ellis. The researches into the records have only produced one or two writs, addressed to Chaucer, while clerk of the works; the several grants and passports granted to him by Edward III and Richard II, which had been referred to by former biographers; together with the poet's evidence in a court of chivalry, a contract about a house, and a solitary receipt for a half year's salary. These, with a few documents referring to John of Gaunt, make the Appendix to the book, and are the only original materials brought to light by the labours of the author. Our readers must be curious to know how, out of such slender materials, Mr. Godwin has contrived to rear such an immense fabric. For this purpose he has had recourse to two fruitful expedients. In the first place, when the name of a town, of a person, or of a science, happens to occur in his narrative, he stops short, to give the history of the city *ab urbe condita*; the life of the man, from his cradle upwards, with a brief account of his ancestors; or a full essay upon the laws and principles of the science, with a sketch of the lives of its most eminent professors. We will not do Mr. Godwin the injustice to suppose, that this mode of biography is copied from some respectable old gentleman prosing by his fireside, who halts in the story of Tom, till he

has given the yawning audience the exploits and genealogy of honest Dick. We believe he profited by instructions derived from no less a person than Miguel Cervantes.

"If you have occasion," says that author, "to mention a giant in your piece, be sure to bring in Goliah, and on this very Goliah (who will not cost you one farthing) you may spin out a swinging annotation. You may say, *The Giant Goliah*, or *Goliat*, was a Philistine, whom David the shepherd slew with the thundering stroke of a pebble, in the valley of Terebinthus. *Vide* Kings, such a chapter and such a verse, where you may find it written. If not satisfied with this, you would appear a great humanist, and would show your knowledge in geography, take some occasion to draw the river Tagus into your discourse, out of which you may fish a most notable remark: *The river Tagus, say you, was so called from a certain king of Spain. It takes its rise from such a place, and buries its waters in the ocean, kissing the walls of the famous city of Lisbon; and some are of opinion that the sands are gold*," &c. &c. &c.

So well has Mr. Godwin profited by these instructions, that the incidents of Chaucer's life, serving as a sort of thread upon which to string his multifarious digressions, bear the same proportion to the book that the alphabet does to the Encyclopedia, or the texts of a volume of sermons to the sermons themselves. A short glance at the work will fully justify this assertion.

Chaucer was born in London.—This is the subject of the first chapter. The commentary is a sketch of the history of London from the year of Christ 50, down to the reign of Edward III, with notices respecting the principal citizens and Lords Mayor, Henry Picard, John Philpot, Sir William Walworth; not forgetting Whittington and his cat. The proportion of the commentary to the text is as twelve pages to as many lines.—Chaucer must have gone to school. —This is text the second, and forms a sufficient apology for a long essay on the learning of the age; while the probability that, during the vacation, Chaucer must have read romances,* introduces a long dissertation on these compositions, awkwardly abridged from Warton and Ellis. But Chaucer must have gone sometimes to church,—and therefore Mr. Godwin feels himself obliged to give an account of the peculiar tenets of the Church of Rome; some of which, par-

* Mr. Godwin may have himself read Valentine and Orson, while at school; but during the 13th century romances were the amusement of grown gentlemen.

ticula y those of purgatory and auricular confession, seem great y to the taste of our philosophical biographer. The author proceeds, with the most unfeeling prolixity, to give a minute detail of the civil and common law, of the feudal instit ions, of the architecture of churches and castles, of scul t re and painting, of minstrels, of players, of parish clerks, &c. &c.; while poor Chaucer, like Tristram Shandy, can hardly be said to be fairly born, although his life has attained the size of half a volume. How these various dissertations are executed, is another consideration; but we at present confine ourselves to the propriety of introducing them as part of the life of Chaucer. We are aware that Mr. Godwin has informed us, that, "to delineate the state of England, such as Chaucer saw it, in every point of view in which it can be delineated, is the subject of this book;" and that "the person of Chaucer may in this view be considered as the central piece in a miscellaneous painting, giving unity and individual application to the otherwise disjointed particulars with which the canvass is diversified." Now, had the biographer either possessed, from the labours of others, or recovered, by his own industry, facts sufficient to make a regular and connected history of Chaucer, bearing some proportion to the "disjointed particulars" so miscellaneously piled together, we could have objected less to the digressive matter, although even then we might have required it to be abridged and condensed. But where the central figure, from which the whole piece takes its name and character, is dimly discoverable in the background, obscured and overshadowed by the motley group of abbeys, castles, colleges, and halls, fantastically portrayed around it, we cannot perceive either unity or individuality in so whimsical a performance. The work may be a view of the manners of the 13th century, containing right good information, not much the worse for the wear; but has no more title to be called a life of Chaucer, than a life of Petrarch.

We have said that Mr. Godwin had two modes of wire-drawing and prolonging his narrative. The first is, as we have seen, by hooking in the description and history of everything that existed upon the earth at the same time with Chaucer. In this kind of composition, we usually lose sight entirely of the proposed subject of Mr. Godwin's lucubrations, travelling to Rome or Palestine with as little remorse

as if poor Chaucer had never been mentioned in the title-page. The second mode is considerably more ingenious, and consists in making old Geoffrey accompany the author upon these frisking excursions. For example, Mr. Godwin has a fancy to describe a judicial trial. Nothing can be more easily introduced; for Chaucer certainly studied at the Temple,* and is supposed to have been bred to the bar.

"It may be amusing to the fancy of a reader of Chaucer's works, to represent to himself the young poet accoutred in the robes of a lawyer, examining a witness, fixing upon him the keenness of his eye, addressing himself with anxiety and expectation to a jury, or exercising the subtlety of his wit and judgment in the development of one of those quirks by which a client was to be rescued from the rigour of strict and unfavouring justice. *Perhaps* Chaucer, in the course of his legal life, saved a thief from the gallows, and gave him a new chance of becoming a decent and useful member of society; *perhaps*, by his penetration, he discerned and demonstrated that innocence, which, to a less able pleader, would never have been evident, and which a less able pleader would never have succeeded in restoring triumphant to its place in the community, and its fair fame. *Perhaps* Chaucer pleaded before Tresilian and Brember, and lived to know that those men whose fiat had silenced his argument, or to whose inferiority of understanding, *it may be*, he was obliged to vail his honoured head, were led to the basest species of execution, amidst the shouts of a brutish and ignorant multitude."—Vol. i, p. 369.

This curious *tirade* is not to be placed among those occasional flourishes to which authors who affect the striking and the sentimental are so peculiarly addicted. It is not given as a day-dream, in which the writer gives reins to the vivacity of his imagination; but the supposed cases which Mr. Godwin puts without the least authority from the record, are gravely intended as illustrations of the Life of Chaucer. For example, the next sentence informs us—"We have a right, however, to conclude, from his early quitting the profession, that he did not love it;" and this averment is followed with a list of the unhappy effects which the study of the law produces on the human understanding and temper. We do not think the profession congenial to the feelings of a youthful poet; but it is probable,

* ["Mr. Thynne declares 'it most certaine to be gathered by circumstances of recordes, that the lawyers *were not of the Temple* till the latter parte of the reygne of Edw. III, at which time Chaucer was a grave manne, holden in greate credyt, and employed in embassye.'"—CAMPBELL—*Specimens of the British Poets*, vol. ii, p. 4.]

that he who could stoop to the drudgery of comptroller of the customs, had other reasons for leaving the bar than mere disgust at the profession; for "cockets and dockets," and "sugar-casks, and beer-butts, and common-council men" (p. 502), may be supposed to have as benumbing an effect upon the heart and imagination, as cases and precedents, and the ambidexter ingenuity of the bar. Another instance of the laudable manner in which the narrative is bolstered out by imaginary circumstances, occurs where Mr. Godwin treats of Chaucer's confinement in the Tower. The biographer is not satisfied with putting the bard into a dungeon; farther severities are conjured up against him; his apartment is supposed to have been changed for a worse. "It *is probable* that he was considered as a person of inferior consequence, and obliged to yield his apartment to some statesman of loftier title, who was a few days after conducted to the scaffold." Nay, further, it is Mr. Godwin's opinion that his friends were denied access to him, and a *mouton* or jail-spy quartered in his chamber; both of which suppositions afford a good sentence or two of philosophical condolence.

"*It is likely* that he was forbidden the visits of his friends; but by the magic power of fancy he called about him celestial visitants. *It is likely* that a jailor or a turnkey was planted in his apartment, under pretence of checking unlicensed attempts at correspondence or escape, but in reality serving only to exclude him from one of the best inheritances of man, the power of being alone in the silence of elemental nature, and with his own thoughts. Chaucer, however, assisted by the workings of his mind, instead of seeing continually the base groom who attended him, saw only the gods who protected and cheered him in his cell."—Vol. ii, p. 477.

It is needless to examine what foundation exists for such vague suppositions, when we know that Chaucer was so much master of his time and thoughts during his confinement as to compose his Testament of Love. His biographer might with equal plausibility have grafted upon his story a supposed attempt to escape, and given us a Newgate calendar chapter from the horrors of Caleb Williams, or the languors of St. Leon. These assertions rest entirely upon the *gratis dictum* of Mr. Godwin, and, with a thousand others, are only introduced with an "it is possible," or "it is probable," or indeed the bare conjunction *if*, which,

having been long renowned for a peace-maker, will doubtless in future be allowed equal virtue in compilation. But we are deeply interested, for our own sake, as well as that of the public, in entering our protest against this mode of book-making. If a biographer be at liberty to introduce into his story a full account of every contemporary subject of disquisition, however little connected with his hero, and can assume the further right of connecting his hero, by virtue of a gratuitous supposition, with whatever scenes he may take a fancy to describe, it is obvious, that unless the author's mercy temper his strength, the rights of the courteous reader are in no small peril. To what length Mr. Godwin might have extended his history, not so much of what Chaucer did actually *do*, as of what he and all his contemporaries *might*, *could*, *would*, or *should have done*, cannot now be exactly ascertained. He informs us in his Preface, that after writing about a thousand quarto pages, it was altogether uncertain when he might have drawn to a close. But there exists a superior power, to which even authors must " vail the honoured head," and, fortunately for the Reviewers, *Ecce Deus ex Machina!*

"If I, enamoured of my subject, might have thought no number of pages, or of volumes, too much for its development, it was by no means impossible that purchasers and readers would think otherwise. My bookseller, who is professionally conversant with matters of this sort, assured me, that two volumes in quarto were as much as the public would allow the title of my book to authorize. It would be in vain to produce a work, whatever information it might comprise, which no one will purchase or read: I have therefore submitted to his decision."

Upon perusing this sentence, the cold drops stood upon our brow at contemplating the peril which we had escaped; and while we lauded the gods for Mr. Phillips' tardy interference in our behalf, we marvelled not a little at the good man's easy faith, which had so long deferred it.

From these remarks upon the general structure of the work, we may now descend to view the execution of the plan, such as it is, beginning with what relates to Chaucer, who (*pars minima sui*) occupies the least share in his own memoirs. It appears to us, that, among the very few facts concerning our bard, which Mr. Godwin has given us, some are assumed without due evidence. For example, we are informed that "having passed through a certain course of educa-

tion, Chaucer was removed to the University of Cambridge." The only proof which is brought of this assertion is, Chaucer's having termed himself, in the Court of Love, "Philogenet of Cambridge, clerk." But we cannot see how the acknowledged falsehood of one part of this designation can possibly prove the truth of the rest; or why Chaucer may not have invented a fictitious character to be attached to a false name. It seems to us much such an argument, as might be adduced to prove that the late Mr. Mason resided at Knightsbridge, inasmuch as that was the pretended abode of the facetious Malcolm Macgregor. In like manner, we are very willing to suppose, that the old bard was a man of a jovial and festive habit; but we would rather infer this from his writings, than from supposing that he daily consumed the whole pitcher of wine which was allowed him by the King. Indeed, from the address of the host to Chaucer, we imagine a personage of a grave and downcast appearance, very different from the idea we might form, *à priori*, of the jolly author of the Canterbury Tales; but it would be as ridiculous to argue from hence, that he was an enemy to mirth, as to hold that, with or without assistance, he daily discussed four bottles of wine, because he received such an allowance from the royal cellar.

The public are indebted to Mr Godwin for the recovery of Chaucer's evidence in a question about bearing arms, occurring betwixt Scrope and Grosvenor;* but the manner in which it is narrated is a good illustration of the strained inferences concerning Chaucer's temper and disposition, deduced by his biographer, from the most common and trivial occurences.

"Chaucer was a man of a frank and easy temper, undeformed by haughtiness and reserve, and readily entering into a certain degree of social intercourse on trivial occasions. This particular is strongly confirmed to us by the curious record of his testimony, in the cause of arms between Scrope and Grosvenor. He describes himself as walking in Friday Street, in the city of London, and observing there the arms he had seen always borne by the family of Scrope hung out as a sign. This inconsiderable circumstance immediately excites an interest in the patriarch of the English language, and English poetry. The Scropes were his friends. He accosts a stranger, whom he perceives accidentally standing

*We hold this to be the only circumstance of importance which Mr. Godwin's researches have brought to light; and so far our thanks are due to him.

by, and asks, 'What inn is that which I observe has hung out the arms of Scrope for its sign?'—'Nay,' replied the other, 'it is no inn, nor are these the arms of Scrope; they are the shield of a Cheshire family of the name of Grosvenor.' In Chaucer, the thus addressing himself to a person unknown, is no evidence of a vulgar, indelicate, and undiscriminating mind. It shows that his was a character, not fastidious enough to refuse to interest itself in trifles, and frank, even and affable in his intercourse with mankind."—Vol. ii, p. 569.

And all this is to be inferred from a question asked at a passenger, the fruit probably of momentary curiosity. This mode of drawing characters ought to supersede that of the ingenious Frenchman, who describes them accurately from seeing the party's handwriting.

While Mr. Godwin was thus poring upon a millstone, and proclaiming his discoveries to the world, we are surprised that he has omitted the famous tradition, that Chaucer, while in the Temple, was fined two shillings "for beating a Franciscan friar in Fleet-Street." (See *Fuller* and *Speght*). This circumstance, with a proper allowance of *possibilities*, would have gone some length in eking out a third quarto. For, in the first place, it is naturally connected with the history of Fleet-Street, aad Fleet-ditch, and the Fleet-Prison, and of Fleta the law-book, and of the fleet or royal navy, with some account of which (so naturally bearing upon the life of Chaucer) the reader must no doubt have been highly gratified. Secondly, the circumstance of the fine, would have happily introduced a history of the silver coinage, with an abbreviate of the Temple records, from the earliest period to the present day; and the political justice of fine and imprisonment might have been discussed in a separate chapter. Thirdly, the mention of the Franciscan would have paved the way with great propriety for a history of the mendicant orders, and have saved Mr. Godwin the trouble and disgrace of foisting it in elsewhere, upon a much more flimsy pretext. (Vol. II, p. 20). But, above all, the cause of the scuffle, and the drubbing itself, would have led to many a learned dissertation. It is probable that one or both parties were in liquor. If so, when, how, or with what liquor did they become intoxicated? Was it with wine of Ape, or of Chepe; with Malverie, or with Hippocras? Was it together, or separately? And can any light be thrown upon the combat, from the similar affray betwixt Justice Shallow when an Inn's of court man, and

Samson Stockfish the fruiterer? Again, it is probable the quarrel originated in some theological dispute,—and the vast and thorny field of controversy might have been accurately surveyed, to enable the reader to fix upon the precise spot occupied by the disputants. Perhaps Chaucer offended the friar by the freedom of his conversation,—and why not insert all the jocose and satirical passages of the Canterbury Tales? To illustrate the nature of the beating, Mr. Godwin might have desrcibed—

> —— "Your *souse*, your *wherit* and your *dowst*,
> *Tugs* on the hair, your *bob* o' the lips, the *thump*,
> ——your *kick*, the fury of a foot,
> Whose indignation commonly is stamped
> Upon the hinder quarters of a man,—
> With all your blows and blow-men whatsoever,
> Set in their lively colours, givers and takers."

All which knowledge is unfortunately lost to the world, perhaps through the ill-considered interference of Mr. Phillips the publisher.

Some particular passages of the life are less fancifully and more correctly delineated. Mr. Godwin combats, and in our opinion successfully, the opinion of those who deny the honourable claim of Thomas Chaucer, to call the poet father: and he has vindicated the relation, which the Dreme of Chaucer unquestionably bears to the History of John of Gaunt.

The critical dissertations upon Troilus and Creseide, and Chaucer's other poems, have considerable merit. They are the production of a man who has read poetry with taste and feeling; and we wish sincerely, that instead of the strange farrago which he calls the Life of Chaucer, he had given us a correct edition of the miscellaneous poetry of the author, upon the same plan with Mr. Tyrwhitt's admirable Canterbury Tales. It is true, that we could not have expected from Mr. Godwin, either the extensive learning or the accuracy of illustration which Mr. Tyrwhitt has displayed. But, as already noticed, his critical disquisitions have occasional merit; and he might have pleaded the ancient prerogative of commentators, for writing in a more rambling and diffusive style than is consistent with the dignity of history or biography. Mr. Godwin is sometimes rather hasty in his critical conclusions. He exclaims against Chaucer, for "polluting the portrait of Creseide's

virgin character in the beginning of the poem, with so low and pitiful a joke as this—

> "But whether that she children had or none,
> I rede it not, therefore I let it gone."—Vol. i, p. 305.

If Mr. Godwin had perused the poem attentively, he would have seen that no joke was intended, and that Creseide was no maiden, but in fact a young widow.

> "And as a widowe was she andalone."

And again, when invited by Pandarus to do honour to May,

> "Eighe! God forbid, quod she, what, be ye mad?
> Is that a *widowe's* life, so God you save?
> It sate me wele better, aie in a cave
> To bide, and rede on holy saintis lives;
> Let *maidins gon to dance and young wives.*"

We were much surprised to find, that the Canterbury Tales, the most important, as well as the most exquisite of Chaucer's productions, have attracted so little of Mr. Godwin's attention. He might have displayed, in commenting upon poems as varied in subject as in beauty, his whole knowledge of the manners of the middle ages, were it ten times more extensive. But Mr. Godwin, beginning probably to write before he had considered either the nature of his subject, or the probable length of his work, had exhausted both his limits and materials ere he came to the topic upon which he ought principally to have dwelt. The characters, therefore, of the several pilgrims, so exquisitely described, that each individual passes before the eyes of the reader, and so admirably contrasted with each other; their conversation and manners, the gallantry of the Knight and Squire, the affected *sentimentality* of the Abbess, the humour of mine Host and the Wife of Bath; the pride of the Monk, the humility of the Parson, the learning and poverty of the Scholar, with the rude but comic portraits of the inferior characters, are, in the history of the life and age of Chaucer, of which they form a living picture, passed over in profound silence, or with very slight notice. The truth is, Mr. Godwin's speed and strength were expended before he came within sight of the goal, and he saw himself compelled with a faint apology to abandon that part of his subject which must have been universally interesting. The

few remarks which he has made upon the Canterbury Tales, induce us to believe that he has seen and regretted his error; but it is a poor excuse, after writing a huge book, to tell the reader that it is but "superficial work," because the author "came a novice to such an undertaking." (See Preface). It is the duty of an editor, to collect and arrange his materials before he begins to print his work; nor will the public be satisfied with an apology, which ought either to have deterred him from the undertaking entirely, or at least to have retarded the execution of it, till study and labour had supplied the defects of superficial information. As Mr. Godwin is unquestionably a man of strong parts, we by no means discourage him from applying himself to illustrate the history of his country, but we would advise him in future, to read *before* he writes, and not merely *while* he is writing.

The history of "Old John of Gaunt time honoured Lancaster," occupies a considerable portion of these volumes. He is styled in the titlepage, Chaucer's "near friend and kinsman;" an abuse of words, if, as we conceive, *kinsman* can only be correctly used to express a blood relation. John of Gaunt was undoubtedly Chaucer's patron, and ultimately stood in a certain degree of affinity to him, by marrying his concubine, a sister of the poet's wife; but this connection could not give to the bard a portion of the blood of the Plantagenets, or render him in any sense the kinsman of the Duke of Lancaster. In the historical part of his work, Mr. Godwin has proposed to himself a splendid plan. Antiquities had, in his opinion, hitherto been the province of

—"men of cold tempers, and sterile imaginations," whose works are compiled "with such narrow views, so total an absence of discrimination, and such an unsuspecting ignorance of the materials of which man is made, that the perusal of them tends for the most part to stupify the sense, and to imbue the soul with moping and lifeless dejection. It was my wish, had my power held equal pace with my strong inclination, to carry the workings of fancy and the spirit of philosophy into the investigation of ages past. I was anxious to rescue, for a moment, the illustrious dead from the jaws of the grave, to make them pass in review before me, to question their spirits, and record their answers. I wished to make myself their master of ceremonies, to introduce my reader to their familiar speech, and to enable him to feel, for the instant, as if he had lived with Chaucer."—Preface, x.

This is well proposed, and expressed with that dignified

contempt of his predecessors' labours, which especially becomes an author at the moment when he is about to avail himself of the information they afford him. But it is one thing to call spirits from the vasty deep, and another to compel their obedience to the invocation. When we expected to see the heroes of Cressy and Poitiers stalk past in the rude and antiquated splendour of chivalry, as perchance they might have appeared upon the summons of Warton, Ellis, or some such *cold-tempered, sterile-minded antiquary*, the philosophical phantasmagoria of Mr. Godwin presented us with a very different set of beings. It seems to have been his rule, that if it be difficult to think like our ancestors, it is very easy to make them think like ourselves; and therefore, whatever motives Mr. Godwin himself esteems praiseworthy and laudable, he imputes to his hero John of Gaunt, with all the liberality and contempt for congruity of the worthy squire who equipped his Vandyke portraits with modern periwigs. In this respect, the work reminds us of a particular class of novels, said to be "founded on real history," in which the *dramatis personæ*, are assumed from the ages of chivalry, but apparelled in the sickly trim of sentiment peculiar to the Grevilles and Julias of Mr. Lane's half-bound duodecimos. Mr. Godwin's dukes and knights hold, in like manner, the language, we had almost said the cant, of his *soi-disant* philosophy; and argue as learnedly of the nature of the human mind, of cause and effect, *and all that*, as if they had occasionally presided at Coachmakers' Hall. The Duke of Lancaster was unquestionably the wisest prince of his time; yet his honoured shade must forgive us, if we deem him incapable of framing the profound and polite oration which he has here supposed to address to Chaucer, upon his being appointed an ambassador. We can only afford room to insert the following grand finale: "Man is a complex being, and is affected with mixed considerations; and your contemporaries will listen with far different feelings to your beautiful and elevated productions, if they flow from an ambassador and a minister of state, than if you remained obscurely sheltered under your natal roof, in the city in which you were born, or sequestered among the groves and streams which adorn your neighbourhood at Woodstock." And this *twaddling* stuff is supposed to be spoken *by* John of Gaunt, and

to Geoffrey Chaucer! And this is carrying "the workings of fancy," and the "spirit of philosophy," into the investigation of ages past, and "rescuing the illustrious dead from the jaws of the grave!" Imbued "with moping and lifeless dejection, and stupified" as we are, after the perusal of two huge quarto volumes of incoherent narrative and trite sentiment, we cannot help feeling, at such absurdity, a momentary impulse of surprise and indignation!

Of the miscellaneous information contained in these volumes, we cannot be expected to treat at length, especially as the greater part of it has nothing to do with the proper subject of the book. It seems to us, that Mr. Godwin, a novice, as he himself informs us, in the study of ancient history, had applied himself to his task with the ardour of a proselyte. Every fact, every peculiar view of manners which occurred in the course of his reading, had to him the charms of novelty; and he was benevolently eager to communicate to others the information which he had just acquired. But, unfortunately, a mind which has newly received a fresh train of ideas, is almost invariably found incapable to abridge or digest them, as no man can draw a map of a country which he traverses for the first time. Upon subjects not familiar to our thoughts, we must be contented to express ourselves with the crude prolixity of the works from which we have derived our information; and our attempts to be copious and distinct, will commonly produce but a string of tedious and ill-combined extracts, instead of a concise and luminous system. Hence the long, dull, and unnecessary details with which Mr. Godwin has favoured us upon every subject which crossed his path. He could but write in proportion as he read, and empty his commonplace as fast only as he filled it. A comprehensive view of his subject we cannot possibly find in his writings; for it was at no time wholly before his own eyes. He knew not when or where to stop; and, in fact, was forced, from mere want of room, to abandon his work, half-finished, at the moment it became most interesting.

Some of the dissertations, considered abstractedly, possess considerable merit; and we cannot refuse praise to the industry of Mr. Godwin, who has acquired a great fund of knowledge, however ill-arranged, upon subjects to which he was so lately an utter stranger. We have already said, that we

would be pleased to see some parts of his book arranged as notes upon Chaucer's poems. We find it impossible to "pick them in a pile of noisome and musty chaff;" but when they are brought forward in a work arranged upon a better plan, our approbation shall be conferred much more willingly than our present censure. A natural consequence of the hurry with which Mr. Godwin has compiled his work, is the inaccuracy which has occasionally crept in, although less frequently than we could have thought possible. Vere, for example, the favourite of Richard II, is likened to "Carr, the minion of James I, with these advantages in favour of the former, that he was of an ancient family, and Carr an upstart," p. 366. This is a mistake. Carr, or Ker, Earl of Somerset, was the third son of Sir Thomas Ker of Fairnyhirst, the chief of a very ancient and powerful family, now represented by the Marquis of Lothian. As he had unfortunately little personal merit, it is hard to deprive him of the advantage of birth, which he really possessed. The universal predominance of the French language in the reign of Edward III, is expressed with rather too much latitude, vol. i, p. 18. Previous to the birth of Chaucer, a remarkable change had begun to take place in this particular. Histories, and long poems of devotion and chivalry, were already translated out of the Romance or French language into English, and these in such numbers as sufficiently to demonstrate that they were not required for the use of the lower and middle classes alone. We should have been pleased to have seen the authority upon which the romances of *Robert sans peur* and *Robert le Diable* are ascribed to Wace, having esteemed these tales of later date than the Roman de Rou. The story of Anlaf the Dane, who is said to have penetrated into King Athelstane's tent, disguised as a minstrel, is rather apocryphal, especially with the miraculous decorations of William of Malmesbury. Mr. Godwin seems to entertain some doubt of John of Gaunt's flight into Scotland, and residence at Holyrood-house. But no fact can be better attested. Andrew of Winton, a contemporary historian, has dedicated a chapter to show

> "Qhwen of Longcastele the Duke
> Refute intil Scotland tuk."—Book ix. c. 4.

He mentions particularly his progress, in which he was attended by Earl William of Douglass, from Berwick to Haddington, and thence to Edinburgh—

> "And intil Haly-rwde-hows that Abbay
> Thai made hym for to take herbry."

This circumstance, and the more recent asylum afforded in Scotland to Henry VI, are probably alluded to by Molinet, when he terms that country

> "De tous siècles, le mendre
> Et le plus tollerant."

The style of Mr. Godwin's life of Chaucer is, in our apprehension, uncommonly depraved, exhibiting the opposite defects of meanness and of bombast. This is especially evident in those sentimental flourishes with which he has garnished his narrative, and which appear to us to be executed in a most extraordinary taste. In the following simile, for example, we hardly know whether most to admire the elegance and power of conception, or the happy ease and dignity of expression.

> "Its splendid pillars (the author is treating of the later Gothic architecture) may possess various excellencies, but they are certainly not magnificent; and the shafts by which the pillars are frequently surrounded have an insignificant air, suggesting to us an idea of fragility; and almost reminding us of *the humble vehicle through which an English or German rustic inhales the fumes of the Indian weed.*"—Vol. i, p. 145.

In p. 181, we hear of "a tune, in which the luxuriance and multiplicity of musical sounds *obscures and tramples with disdain upon the majestic simplicity of words.*" In other places, we find "the *technicalities* of justice"—"the *religious nerve* of the soul of man"—young knights who looked upon the field of Roncesvalles with "*augmented circulation*"—"*unforshortened figures*,"—an "ancient baron *neighboured* to a throne," and sundry other extremely new and whimsical expressions. But even these conceited barbarisms offend us less than the execrable taste displayed in the following account of Chaucer's early studies:

> "He gave himself up to the impressions of nature, and to the sensations he experienced. He studied the writings of his contemporaries, and of certain of the ancients. He was learned according to the learning of his age. He wrote, because he felt himself impelled to write. He analyzed the models which were before him. He sought to please his friends and fellow scholars in the two Universities. He aspired to an extensive and lasting reputation."—Vol. i, p. 436.

We have no doubt that Mr. Godwin considers these short

sentences as the true model of a nervous and concise style. For our part, we find the sense so poor and trite, when compared with the pithy and sententious mode of delivery, that we feel in our closet the same shame we have sometimes experienced in the theatre, when a fourth-rate actor has exposed himself by mouthing, slapping his pockets, and, according to the stage phrase, *making the most* of a trifling part. We will not pursue this subject any further, although we could produce from these ponderous tomes some notable instances of the mock heroic, and of the tone of false and affected sentiment. Such passages have tempted us to exclaim with Pandarus (dropping only one letter of his ejaculation,)

> "Alas! alas! so noble a creature
> As is a man should *reden** such ordure!"

Upon the whole, Mr. Godwin's friends have, in one respect, great reason to be satisfied with the progress of his convalescence. We hope and trust, that the favourable symptoms of his case may continue. He is indeed now and then very *low;* or, in other words, uncommonly dull; but there is no apparent return of that fever of the spirits which alarmed us so much in his orignal publications. The insurrection of Jack Straw (a very dangerous topic) produces only a faint and moderate aspiration breathed towards the "sacred doctrines of equality," which it is admitted are too apt to be "rashly, superficially, and irreverently acted upon, involving their disciples in the most fearful calamity." The disgrace of Alice Pierce, or Perrers, the *chere amie* of Edward III, or, as Mr. Godwin delicately terms her, "the chosen companion of his hours of retirement and leisure," calls down his resentment against the turbulence and rudeness of the Good Parliament. But less could hardly have been expected from the author of the memoirs of a late memorable female.†

We cannot help remarking that the principles of a modern philosopher continue to alarm the public, after the good man himself has abandoned them, just as the very truest tale will sometimes be distrusted from the habitual false-

* For *dreden*.

† [Memoirs of Mary Woolstonecroft, author of "The Rights of Woman." 8vo. 1798.]

hood of the narrator. We fear this may have incommoded Mr. Godwin in his antiquarian researches, more than he seems to be aware of. When he complains that private collectors declined "to part with their treasures for a short time out of their own hands," did it never occur to Mr. Godwin that the maxims concerning property, contained in his "Political Justice," were not altogether calculated to conciliate confidence in the author?

But, upon the whole, the Life of Chaucer, if an uninteresting, is an innocent performance; and were its prolixities and superfluities unsparingly pruned (which would reduce the work to about one-fourth of its present size), we would consider it as an accession of some value to English literature.

TODD'S EDITION OF SPENSER.*

[Edinburgh Review, 1805.]

A COMPLETE and respectable edition of Spenser's works, has been long a *desideratum* in English literature. Indeed, to what purpose do our antiquaries purchase at high rates, and peruse, at the cost of still more valuable leisure and labour, the treasures of the black letter, which in themselves, have usually so very little to repay their exertions? Surely, the only natural and proper use of the knowledge thus acquired, is to throw light, as well upon our early literature, as on the manners and language of our ancestors, by re-editing and explaining such of our ancient authors as have suffered by the change of both. Amongst these, Spenser must ever be reckoned one of the most eminent; for no author, perhaps, ever possessed and combined, in so brilliant a degree, the requisite qualities of a poet. Learned, according to the learning of his times, his erudition never appears to load or encumber his powers of imagination; but even the fictions of the classics, worn out as they are by the use of every pedant, become fresh and captivating themes, when adopted by his fancy, and accommodated to his plan. If that plan has now become to the reader of riper years somewhat tedious and involved, it must be allowed, on the other hand, that from Cowley downwards, every youth of imagination has been enchanted with the splendid legends of the Faëry Queen. It was therefore with pleasure that we turned to the examination of a work, which promised to recall the delightful sensations of our earlier

* *On the works of* EDMUND SPENSER, *with the principal Illustrations of various Commentators: To which are added, Notes, some Account of the Life of* SPENSER, *and a Glossarial and other Indexes. By the Reverend* JOHN TODD, M. A., F. A. S. 8 *vols.* 1805.]

studies; and if we have been in some respects disappointed in the perusal, we do not impute it altogether to want of diligence or accuracy on the part of Mr. Todd, whose commentary, so far as it goes, is in both respects commendable. In the Life of Spenser, which is the longest specimen of original composition, he has brought forward several new facts, and evinced a laudable anxiety to throw light upon the story, by comparison of dates, and investigation of contemporary documents. The result of his labours is stated in so modest a manner, as ought, in some degree, to disarm the harshness of criticism. He himself terms it "a very humble account of the Life of Spenser, drawn from authentic records, the curiosity and importance of which, will, I trust, be admitted by the liberal and candid as an apology for the want of biographical elegance."

It is, however, our duty to point out some defects in the plan of this Memoir, by avoiding which, we apprehend, much might have been added to its perspicuity and elegance, without the least derogation from its authenticity.

The events of Spenser's earlier life are, in some measure, extracted from a correspondence betwixt the poet and Gabriel Harvey, the same against whom Nash wrote the satire, well known among collectors, entitled, "Have with you to Saffron-Walden, or Gabriel Harvey's Hunt's up." It was highly meritorious in Mr. Todd to peruse these letters, and to consider them as proper materials for his biography. But we are disposed to blame him, first, because he has not republished an entire copy of this curious correspondence, which was of so much importance to the matter in hand; and, secondly, because, instead of printing the letters as an appendix to the life, he has thrust large extracts from them into the midst of his own narrative. Nothing, indeed, in our opinion, could have a more confused and inelegant effect than this medley of narrative and quotation. The biographer should always study to give his work the appearance of continuity. He may and ought to refer distinctly to the sources of his information; and where there is doubt, the words of the original documents may be subjoined in a note to justify his inference; but the text ought to be expressed historically, and in the language of the author himself. It is extremely awkward to jump from the words of the narrator into those of Spenser, and has, be-

sides, the effect of making one part of the memoir bear a great disproportion to the other; for the letter-writer spends much more time in discussing the matter then immediately before him, than the biographer has probably an opportunity of bestowing upon incidents of much greater importance. Nevertheless, although these letters are thus thrust upon our hands in a disorderly manner, the extracts have afforded us amusement, and give room, as we have already hinted, to regret that they had not been printed separately, with such explanatory notes, as Mr. Todd's researches suggested. We perceive from thence, that Spenser had busied himself in the fruitless and unharmonious task of versifying, as it was then called, that is, of composing English verses according to the Latin prosody. He seems, at the same time, to have been fully sensible of the difficulty of the attempt, and we wonder at his perseverance, after the humour with which he describes its effects.

"I like your late Englishe Hexameters so exceedingly well, that I also enure my penne sometime in that kinde: whyche I fynd indeed, as I have heard you often defende in worde, neither so harde nor so harshe, that it will easily and fairely yeeld it selfe to oure moother tongue. For the onely, or chiefest hardnesse, whyche seemeth, is in the accente; whyche sometime gapeth, and as it were yawneth ilfavouredly; coming shorte of that it should, and sometime exceeding the measure of the number, as in *Carpenter*, the middle sillable being used shorte in speache, when it shall be read long in verse, seemeth like a lame gosling, that draweth one legge after hir: and *Heaven*. being used shorte as one sillable when it is in verse, stretched out with a diastole, is like a lame dogge that holdes up one legge. But it is to be wonne with custome, and rough words must be subdued with use. For, why a God's name, may not we, as else the Greekes, have the kingdome of our owne language, and measure our accentes, by the sounde, reserving the quantitie to the verse? Loe here I let you see my olde use of toying in rymes, turned into your artificial straightnesse of verse by this *Tetrasticon*. I beseech you tell me your fancie, without parcialitie.

"See ye the blindefoulded pretie god, that feathered archer,
  Of lovers miseries which maketh his bloodie game?
Wote ye why his moother with a veale hath covered his face?
  Truste me, least he my Loove happely chaunce to beholde."

We could hardly have suspected Spenser, the marshalled march of whose stanza is in general so harmonious, of drilling the stubborn and unmanageable words of the English language into such strange doggrel. The verses are truly

"lame and o'erburthened, and screaming their wretchedness."

From another passage in this correspondence, the young poet may learn how little he ought to rely upon the taste even of the ablest counsellor. Harvey was a scholar, and, in some sense, even a poet; he was, moreover, Spenser's *long approved and singular good friend;* nevertheless, Gabriel had the assurance to write the following libel upon the Faëry Queen, for the conceited pedantry of which he deserves a worse *Hunts up* than was played him by Nashe.

"In good faith I had once againe nigh forgotten *your Faërie Queene:* howbeit, by good chaunce I have nowe sent hir home at the laste, neither in better nor worse case than I found hir. And must you, of necessitie, have my judgement of hir in deede? To be plaine; I am voyde of al judgement, if your nine Comædies,* whereunto, in imitation of Herodotus, you give the names of the Nine Muses (and in one mans fansie not unworthily), come not neerer Ariostoes *Comædies*, eyther for the finenesse of plausible elocution, or the rarenesse of poetical invention, than that *Elvish Queene* doth to his *Orlando Furioso;* which, notwithstanding, you wil needes seeme to emulate, and hope to overgo, as you flatly professed yourself in one of your last Letters. But I will not stand greatly with you in your own matters. If so be the *Fairie Queene* be fairer in your eie than the Nine Muses, and Hobgoblin runne away with the garland from Apollo; marke what I saye; and yet I will not say that [which] I thought; but there an end for this once, and fare you well till God, or some good Aungell, putte you in *a better mind.*"—P. xlv, xlvi.

There is another circumstance which gives Mr. Todd's Life of Spenser a more clumsy and ungainly appearance than the matter itself really deserves. It has been observed long ago, that the history of an author is the history of his works; and therefore Mr. Todd has, with great propriety, regularly recorded the various publications of his author, in the order in which they were given to the world; but, from a want of arrangement, not peculiar to this editor, he has uniformly appended to his notices of these publications, a variety of circumstances, illustrative of their contents, which properly make no part of Spenser's life, although they ought to have been introduced as notes upon his writings. It certainly is not always easy to separate exactly the department of the biographer from that of the commentator; but it is

* "It is to be lamented," says Mr. Cooper Walker, in a letter to Mr. Todd, "that Spenser's *nine Comedies*, so much extolled by Harvey, are lost."

obvious, that to interrupt the narrative, by notes critical and illustratory, must necessarily destroy the effect of both. To these preliminary observations, which affect rather the manner than the matter of Mr. Todd's memoir, we subjoin the leading incidents of Spenser's life, as they have been illustrated by his industry.

The fame of this poet, however great during his lifetime, seems to have excited no inquiry into his parentage. He himself informs us that he was born in

> "Merry London, my most kindly nurse,
> That to me gave this life's first native source,
> Though from another place I take my name,
> A house of ancient fame."

But although Spenser alludes repeatedly to his gentle birth, and claims kindred with several persons of rank, his parents were entirely unknown; a circumstance which Mr. Todd, in beginning his life, passes over without commentary. It appears from a passage in one of his sonnets, that the Christian name of his mother was Elizabeth; and this is all we know of the matter. The birth of the poet is conjectured to have taken place about 1553; but the first event of his life which has been ascertained, is his admission as a sizer of Pembroke Hall, in Cambridge, 1569, where he acquired the degree of Bachelor and Master of Arts in 1572–3 and 1576. Here commenced his intimacy with Gabriel Harvey. He seems to have been disappointed, either in his views of a fellowship, or of some other academical distinction, which has not prevented his gratitude to his *alma mater* from breaking forth in his account of the Ouze, who

> "Doth by Huntingdon and Cambridge flit;
> My mother Cambridge, whom, as with a crown,
> He doth adorn, and is adorned of it,
> With many a gentle muse, and many a learned wit."

From the University, Spenser seems to have retired to some friends in the north. Of the cause of his journey, or his occupation while with them, we have no record. Here he composed, besides lesser poems, the Shepherd's Calendar; a work which, in some places, exhibits a beautiful model of pastoral poetry, and in others, that turn for allegorizing and moralizing two meanings in the same tale which gave rise to the Faëry Queen.

It is supposed that some passages in these poems, of a

nature rather political than pastoral, particularly a warm eulogium on Archbishop Grendal, drew down upon our author the wrath of the great Burleigh; the effects of which, although deprecated by Spenser, and exaggerated perhaps by former biographers, certainly continued to attend him through his life. It was in vain he ascribed to a commentary of the Blatant Beast Slander, that construction of his poetry, which had drawn on him "a mighty peer's displeasure." It was in vain that, among the worthies of Elizabeth's court, to whom he addressed separate sonnets with his Faëry Queen, he distinguished Burleigh by the most flattering strain of adulation. We find, from repeated passages in his works, that his offence was never forgotten or forgiven. But the Shepherd's Calendar, although unfortunate in making our poet one powerful and inveterate enemy, secured him many active and distinguished friends. Its fame was the means of introducing him to the friendship of Sir Philip Sidney, and to that of Leicester; a more powerful, if less discerning patron. The latter received Spenser into his house, though in what capacity does not precisely appear; perhaps in order to facilitate the composition of the *Stemmata Dudleiana*, an account of the Earl's genealogy, with which Spenser appears to have been busied in 1580. At this time the poet was also engaged with his Faëry Queen, with the Dying Pellican, with the Visions, which he afterwards published in a more correct shape, and sundry less important labours. About July, in the same year, he received, doubtless, through the patronage of Lord Leicester, the honourable appointment of secretary to Arthur Lord Grey, then nominated Lord-lieutenant of Ireland, which he held till Lord Grey's return to England in 1582. Spenser appears to have been sincerely attached to this nobleman, whom he has distinguished in his Faëry Queen under the character of Arthegal, or Justice. Lord Grey's course with the Irish was that of severity, for excess of which he seems to have been recalled to England. Hence Spenser describes Arthegal, when returning from the adventure of succouring Irene, as leaving his work unfinished.

"But, ere he could reform it thoroughly,
He through occasion called was away
To Faëry Court, that of necessity
His course of justice he was forced to stay."

On his return, the victorious knight is attacked by Envy, by Detraction, and by the Blatant Beast, or Slander, who railed against him;

> " Saying that he had, with unmanly guile
> And foul abusion, both his honour blent,
> And that bright sword, the sword of justice lent,
> He stained with reproachful cruelty
> In guiltless blood of many an innocent:
> As for Grandtorto, him with treacherie
> And traines having surprised, he foully did to die."

This last accusation is referred by Upton to Lord Grey's putting to death the Spaniards who held out the fort of Smerwick, after they had surrendered to him at discretion; which "sharp execution" Spenser has justified at more length in his State of Ireland. After the recall of Lord Grey, the poet's services in the state, and perhaps also his poetical fame, was rewarded by the grant of the castle of Kilcolman, in the county of Cork, and 3028 acres out of the forfeited estate of the Earl of Desmond. Mr. Todd has copied, from Smith's History of the County of Cork, the following interesting account of our poet's residence upon this property, during the happiest part of his life.

" 'Two miles northwest of Doneraile is Kilcolman, a ruined castle of the Earls of Desmond; but more celebrated for being the residence of the immortal Spenser, where he composed his divine poem, *The Faërie Queene.* The castle is now almost level with the ground. It was situated on the north side of a fine lake, in the midst of a vast plain, terminated to the east by the county of Waterford mountains; Ballyhowra hills to the north, or, as Spenser terms them, the mountains of Mole; Nagle mountains to the south; and the mountains of Kerry to the west. It commanded a view of above half of the breadth of Ireland; and must have been, when the adjacent uplands were wooded, a most pleasant and romantic situation; from whence, no doubt, Spenser drew several parts of the scenery of his poem. The river Mulla, which he more than once has introduced in his poems, ran through his grounds.' Here, indeed, the poet has described himself, as keeping his flock under the foot of the mountain Mole, amongst the cooly shades of green aldars, by the shore of Mulla; and charming his oaten pipe (as his custom was) to his fellow shepherd swains."—*Life*, p. l, li.

We are here tempted to copy two stanzas, descriptive of Spenser's tranquil retreat, and containing, especially the first, the most happy imitation of the rich and artful melody of his versification.

"Awake, ye west windes, through the lonely dale,
And Fancy to thy faerie bower betake;
Even now with balmie freshness breathes the gale,
Dimpling with downie wing the stilly lake;
Through the pale willows faultering whispers wake,
And evening comes with locks bedropt with dew;
On Desmond's mouldering turrets slowly shake
The trembling rie-grass and the hare-bell blew;
And ever and anon fair Mulla's plaints renew.

"O for the namelesse power to strike mine eare,
The power of charm by Naiads once possest!
Melodious Mulla! when full oft while eare
Thy gliding numbers soothed the gentle brest
Of haplesse Spenser, long with woes opprest,
Long with the drowsie patron's smiles decoyed,
Till in thy shades, no more with cares distrest,
No more with painful, anxious hopes accloyed,
The Sabbath of his life the mild good man enjoyed."

The delight of these halcyon days was enhanced by a visit which Sir Walter Raleigh made to his estates in our author's vicinity in 1589. To the criticism of the Shepherd of the Ocean, as Spenser elsewhere termed him, the poet submitted such books of the Faëry Queen as he had then finished; and was determined, by his ardent approbation, immediately to prepare them for the press. For this purpose, he accompanied Sir Walter in his return to England; and in 1590, the three first books of this beautiful poem were given to the world. The author of a romantic poem did not remain long unrewarded in the romantic court of Elizabeth. The Earl of Essex, who replaced, as the flower of chivalry, the amiable Sidney, was now added to Spenser's former patrons; and, under their auspices, our poet received from Queen Elizabeth a pension of £50 yearly; and perhaps the list of laureate dulness has some title to be illuminated by the name of Spenser. Some farther advantages, probably a permanent establishment in Britain, appear to have been unsuccessfully solicited by our author; for the striking lines, describing the miseries of a suitor for court favour, have been always understood to refer to his own disappointments.

"Full little knowest thou, that hast not tried,
What hell it is, in suing long to bide:
To lose good days, that might be better spent;
To waste long nights in pensive discontent;
To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow;
To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow;

To have thy princess' grace, yet want her peers';
To have thy asking, yet wait many years;
To frett thy soul with crosses and with cares;
To eat thy heart through comfortless despairs;
To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to ronne;
To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.'
Mother Hubbard's Tale.

In the same satire and elsewhere, Spenser has not hesitated to launch the darts of his satire against his powerful enemy Lord Burleigh. After the publication of the Faëry Queen in 1590, Spenser seems to have returned to Ireland, where he was soon after married. The progress of his passion and its success is celebrated in his sonnets and Epithalamion. Mr. Todd supposes this happy event to have taken place in 1594. The surname of the beautiful Elizabeth has escaped the researches of the biographer. In the year 1595, to omit lesser particulars, the next three books of the Faëry Queen made their appearance. There is an unauthorized story told by Sir James Ware, that about this time Spenser had written the remaining six cantos of that beautiful poem, which were afterwards lost by the carelessness of his servant in passing from Ireland. But it appears much more probable, that the work was never completed by the author, especially when we consider how long he had dwelt upon the first three books. It is too certain that, if any fragments, excepting the two cantos of "Mutabilitie," did ever exist, they are entirely lost to the world, and were probably destroyed in the wreck of our author's fortune, when his house was pillaged by the rebels. Spenser visited England in 1596, when he appears to have presented to the Queen and her ministers his View of the State of Ireland: which probably induced Elizabeth to recommend him to the office of sheriff of Cork, by a letter dated in September, 1598. But, in October following, Tyrone, who had been long in arms, obtained that signal victory over Sir Henry Bagnol, marshal of Ireland, which was long after remembered by the name of the Defeat of Blackwater. He instantly summoned his secret confederates in Munster to imitate him in assailing the English settlers. The call was obeyed; and the insurrection, like those we have had the misfortune to witness in later times, broke out with the irresistible fury of a volcano. At the head of the Munster rebels was James Fitzthomas Geraldine, titular Earl of Desmond. It was natural that he and

his followers should be inflamed with the most bitter indignation against "the English Undertakers," as they were called, to whom the forfeited estates of the Geraldines had been granted after Desmond's war.

"And to speak truth," says Fynes Morrison, who had the best access to know the fact, "Munster undertakers were in great part cause of this defection, and of their own fatal miseries. For, whereas they should have built castles, and brought over colonies of English, and have admitted no Irish tenant, but only English, these and like covenants were in no part performed by them. Of whom the men of best quality never came over, but made profit of the land; others brought no more English but their own families; and all entertained Irish servants and tenants, which were now the first to betray them. If the covenants had been kept by them, they themselves might have made two thousand able men; whereas, the Lord President could not find above two hundred of English birth amongst them, when the rebels first entered the province. Neither did these gentle undertakers make any resistance to the rebels; but left their dwellings, and fled to walled towns; yea, when there was such danger in flight, as greater could not have been in defending their own, whereof many of them had woful experience, being surprised with their wives and families in flight."

We have been full in our account of this insurrection, because Mr. Todd has not thought proper to explain to his readers either the nature of the grants to the Munster Undertakers, of whom Spenser was one, or the progress of the insurrection, by which our author was so great a sufferer. Indeed, he has always substituted *Tyrone's* rebellion for that of *Desmond*, with dubious propriety, since that branch of the rebellion by which Spenser suffered is allowed to have burst forth in October, 1598; which is true of the Munster insurrection, but not of the original war of Tyrone, which had already raged in Ulster for several years. Spenser, who held the castle and estate of Kilcolman, an ancient appanage of the Geraldines, who had been clerk of council for the province, and who, in his View of Ireland, had advised that future Lieutenants should follow the example of the severe and inflexible Grey, had little to hope from the rebels. Accordingly, he fled with precipitation,—such precipitation, that an infant child of the poet's appears to have been left behind, who perished when the rebels burned his castle. He arrived in London in misery and indigence. The bounty of Essex and of his other friends might save him from the extremity of poverty; but, in proportion as the sufferers under a calamity are numerous, relief becomes more difficult, and

individual distress is regarded with less commiseration. Spenser never subdued the impressions of sorrow and misfortune. He died of a broken heart at London, in January, 1599.

We have thus made a brief analysis of Todd's Life of Spenser, which is the principal portion of original matter contributed to this edition by the editor. The memoir, in point of style, is of a dry, sober, and sleepy cast: elegance has not perhaps been aimed at; certainly it has not been attained.

To the life is subjoined a list of the editions of Spenser, and of his professed imitators. To the latter might have been added the unknown author of the Battle of the Sexes, an allegorical poem, in the manner of Spenser, which, though now forgotten, contains some very striking passages.

The edition of the poems themselves is published *cum notis variorum;* so that instead of extracting from his predecessors' labours their spirit and essence, Mr. Todd has overlaid poor Spenser with the unselected mass of their commentaries in addition to his own; and, after all, we are much afraid the text is, in many instances, rather burdened than assisted. In fact, as no author deserved the commentary of a kindred spirit so much as Spenser, we are greatly surprised that the task has not been long since undertaken by some person better qualified than Upton, Hughes, Church, or even Tom Wharton himself. As none merits, so perhaps few English authors so much require, the assistance of a commentator. The plan of the Faëry Queen is much more involved than appears at first sight to a common reader. Spenser himself has intimated this in his letter to Sir Walter Raleigh prefixed to the poem. For there he mentions, that he has often a general and particular intention, as when he figures, under Gloriana, the general abstract idea of glory, but also the particular living person of Queen Elizabeth. This "continued allegory of dark conceit," therefore contains, besides the general allegory or moral, many particular and minute allusions to persons and events in the court of Queen Elizabeth, as well as to points of general history. The ingenuity of a commentator would have been most usefully employed in decyphering what, "for avoiding of jealous opinions and misconstructions," our author did not choose to leave too open to the contemporary reader. But although everything

belonging to the reign of the Virgin Queen carries with it a secret charm to Englishmen, no commentator of the Faëry Queen has taken the trouble to go very deep into those annals, for the purpose of illustrating the secret, and as it were, esoteric allusions of Spenser's poems. Upton is the only one who has pointed out some of these relations and allusions; but he has neither been sufficiently particular, nor is the low vulgar familiarity of his style a fit accompaniment to the lofty verse of Spenser. Church and Hughes both remain in the court of the Gentiles; and the present worthy commentator adds little to their labours, save a few crumbs of verbal criticism. We fear they have verified the saying of Hamlet, that a knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear. Those political innuendos which Spenser wrapt up in mystery and allegory, may even remain like unexpounded oracles, for all the light these learned gentlemen can throw upon them. They have not even followed the clue thrown out by Upton. As for the late laureate, it is well known that he could never follow a clue of any kind. With a head abounding in multifarious lore, and a mind unquestionably imbued with true poetic fire, he wielded that most fatal of all implements to its possessor, a pen so scaturient and unretentive, that we think he himself must have been often astonished, not only at the extent of his lucubrations, but at their total and absolute want of connection with the subject he had assigned to himself. Thus, instead of a history of poetry, he presented the world with three huge volumes of mingled and indigested quotations and remarks, in which the reader, like the ancient alchymists in their researches, is sure to meet everything but what he is seeking for. Had Mr. Wharton, therefore, sat down to explain the political allusions of Spenser, he would probably have commenced with an erudite history of Crœsus, king of Lydia. So useless are parts and erudition, when not directed soberly and steadily to the illustration of the point in hand. It may be expected that we should produce some examples of the crimes of omission imputable to Mr. Todd and his predecessors.

The Red-Cross Knight, in the obvious and general interpretation, signifies "Holiness;" or, the perfection of the Spiritual Man in Religion. But, in the political and particular sense, the adventures of St. George bear a peculiar and obvious, though not a uniform, reference to the history

of the Church of England as established by Queen Elizabeth. Thus, we find the orthodox church, in its earlier history, surmounting the heresies of the Arians, and many others; as the Red-Cross Knight, while animated by the voice of Una or Truth, destroys the monster Error and her brood. Again, he defeats Sans Foy, but falls into the snares of Duessa, the leman of the vanquished knight. Thus the church, in the reign of Constantine, triumphed over Paganism, but was polluted by Error in consequence of its accession to temporal sovereignty. Hence its purity was affected by those vices which are described as inhabiting the house of Pride; and, becoming altogether relaxed in discipline, the church was compelled to submit to the domination of the Pope. These events are distinctly figured out in the imprisonment of the Red-Cross Knight in the Castle of Orgoglio, and in Duessa's assuming the trappings and seven-headed palfrey of the Whore of Babylon. Here the poet also seems dimly to have shadowed forth what was not too plainly to be named—the persecution in the days of Queen Mary.

> "But all the floor (too filthy to be told)
> With blood of guiltless babes and innocents true,
> Which there were slain as sheep out of the fold,
> Defiled was, that dreadful was to view;
> And sacred ashes over it was strowed new."

The conquest of Orgoglio and Duessa do therefore plainly figure forth the downfall of Popery in England, as the enlargement of the Red-Cross signifies the freedom of the Protestant Church, happily accomplished by the accession of Queen Elizabeth. Yet these obvious inferences have escaped the commentators of Spenser.

The affection of Timias for Belphæbe, is allowed, on all hands, to allude to Sir Walter Raleigh's pretended admiration of Queen Elizabeth; and his disgrace, on account of a less Platonic intrigue with the daughter of Sir Nicolas Throgmorton, together with his restoration to favour, are plainly pointed out in the subsequent events. But no commentator has noticed the beautiful insinuation by which the poet points out the error of his friend, and of his friend's wife. Timias finds Amoret in the arms of Corflambo, or sensual passion; he combats the monster unsuccessfully, and wounds the lady in his arms. We have not time to go

through many other minute circumstances alluding to the history and intrigues of Queen Elizabeth's reign. Many of them are noticed in Upton's notes; but, we think, without sufficiently detailing the authorities on which he grounds his explanation. The fiery spirit of the unfortunate Earl of Westmoreland is detected under the personage of Blandamour, fickle both in friendship and in love, and easily heated into brawls, even when an exile in the Prince of Parma's court; of which the instance in the note might with propriety have been quoted. Mr. Todd has, however, added nothing to what Upton has done, in explanation of Spenser's historical allusions, although that poet himself hath told us,

> "Of faëry lond yet if he more inquire,
> By certain signs, here set in sundry place,
> He may it find; ne let him then admire,
> But yield his sense to be too blunt and base,
> That note without a hound fine footing trace."

But there is another, and perhaps still more interesting source of inquiry, opened by the perusal of Spenser's poem. We allude to the state of Italian literature at the period when he wrote. That country had awakened from the sleep of barbarous ignorance, at least three centuries before the rest of Europe, and had already decorated, with classical imagery and allusions, many a story of Gothic origin. It would be necessary to plunge deep into the history of their poetry to explain the extent to which Spenser has made it the object of his imitation; and in this Mr. Todd appears to us to have failed in research or in success. In fact, that gentleman's ambition seems to have been limited to the humble task of choosing betwixt contested readings, in which he is generally guided by sound judgment, and in explaining obsolete words, in which he is sometimes insufferably and unnecessarily prolix. For example, the common word *port*, applied to personal carriage, is authorized by a note about the *port* and *countenance* of the lord mayor of London. There is another long note about the expression "hurly-burly," which elegant phrase he does us the honour to deduce from Scotland. There is also a prodigious long quotation from Don Quixote, to verify the fact, that knights-errant, like most other people, bestowed names upon their horses. We have also tedious discussions, not

the less dull for being backed with classical authority, upon such questions as, whether Spenser did write, or ought to have written Acidalian, or Aridalian; and not a heathen god or goddess escapes without a full account of their breed and generation, for which, perhaps, the reader might have been briefly referred to Tooke's Pantheon. On the other hand, many obscure references, which do not fall within the course of general study, are left unexplained, or perhaps the perplexed reader is coolly referred to some work of rare occurrence for the solution. Thus, for the prophecy concerning the "fatal Welland," we are in a great measure turned over to the instruction of Anthony a Wood; and no information at all is given concerning the ancient fabulous history of Britain, which Spenser so often refers to, and upon which every day is now throwing more light.

But it was chiefly in that very curious and interesting tract, the View of the State of Ireland, that Spenser required the aid of a commentator to elucidate his positions as a historian and antiquary, aad very frequently to correct his answers. Hardly any picture is more interesting than that of the poet reviewing at once with fear and with some degree of respect, the manners of the rude natives by whom he was surrounded; and it is a shame to literature that nothing has been added worth noticing to what Sir James Ware has long since said on so curious a subject.

To conclude, we are well aware that the trade find their advantage in publishing what are technically called Variorum editions of celebrated authors. It saves copy money, saves trouble, saves everything but the credit of the unfortunate poet. Where the poet and commentator are fairly opposed to each other, the former has at least some chance of coming off victorious; but five to one would be odds even against Gully or the Game Chicken; and it is impossible that an ordinary reader can form a just judgment of the text, which is absolutely borne down and overwhelmed by the dull, dubious, and contradictory commentaries of so many uncongenial spirits. Their regard for the author is expressed like the gratitude of the Gauls, who overwhelmed with their bucklers the virgin to whom they were indebted for the conquest of a city.

HERBERT'S POEMS.*

[Edinburgh Review, 1806.]

These little volumes contain a variety of translations from the Norse, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, &c., with a few original pieces. Those by which we have been most interested, are contained under the title of "Select Icelandic Poetry," being versions of celebrated passages in the Edda of Sæmundar, and other specimens of Scaldic poetry. These translations form the *first* part of the first volume, and the *second* part of the second; a confused and capricious arrangement, which we wish had been avoided. They are, to a certain degree, a novelty in our literature; for although translations of many of these very pieces have been made by poets of different degrees of merit, from Gray to Amos Cottle, yet it has happened, rather perversely, that not one of these translators understood the original Icelandic, but contented themselves with executing their imitations from the Latin version, and thus presenting their readers with the shadow of a shade. We can only estimate the injustice which the old Scalds sustained in this operation, by considering what sort of translation could be made of any Greek poet from the Latin version. Mr. Herbert has stepped forward to rescue these ancient poets from this ignominious treatment; and his intimate acquaintance with the languages of the North is satisfactorily displayed in an introductory address to the Hon. C. Anker, Director of the Danish East India Company, executed in Danish poetry, as well as by many learned criticisms scattered through the work. We do not pretend any great knowledge of the Norse; but we have so far "traced the Runic rhyme," as to be sensi-

* *On Miscellaneous Poetry*. By the Honourable W. Herbert, 2 vols. 8vo. 1805.

ble how much more easy it is to give a just translation of that poetry into English than into Latin; and, consequently, how much is lost by the unnecessary intermediate transfusion. Indeed, the double difficulty of first rendering the Norse into the Latin, and then the Latin into English, and thus interposing a version in a foreign and uncongenial tongue, between the original and the English, although this last is a kindred language, very similar, in its more ancient idiom to the Icelandic, has led to many, and some very absurd errors, in what has hitherto been given as Scaldic poetry. For example, in the famous death-song of Regnar Lodbrog, that renowned warrior has been made to assert, that the joy of a bloody battle, which he had just described, was superior to that of sleeping with a young virgin; and in another passage, he is made to aver yet more specifically, that the pleasure of battering the helmet with the keen falchion, was like that of kissing a young widow reclining upon a high seat. Now, whatever partiality Regnar might entertain for the sport of swords, the dance of Hilda, and for his favourite amusement of hacking with helmets, he had too much taste to give the preference imputed in these passages, which are thus justly rendered by Mr. Herbert.

> "Bucklers brast, and men were slain,
> Stoutest skulls were cleft in twain,
> 'Twas *not*, I trow, like wooning rest
> On gentle maiden's snowy breast."

Again—

> "Where falchions keen
> Bit the helmet's polish'd sheen,
> 'Twas *not* like kissing widow sweet
> Reclining in the highest seat."

Such was the real and unbiassed opinion of Regnar with the Hairy Breeches; and truly we heartily join in it. The elegant Mason, as well as Bishop Percy, fell into a similar blunder in translating the love-song of Harold the valiant, which they understood to be a complaint, that, notwithstanding all the great deeds which he had performed, "a Russian maiden scorned his love." Now, this burden is accurately rendered by Mr. Herbert, after Perinskiold.

> "With golden ring in Russian land,
> To me the virgin plights her hand."

Having noticed these gross errors, it is unnecessary to

say how much of the spirit of the poetry, which is so much more volatile, must necessarily have escaped in versions, where even plain sense and meaning is so sadly corrupted. We therefore hail with pleasure an attempt to draw information from the fountain-head, especially where it is interesting both in point of intrinsic poetic merit, and as a curious source of historic investigation.

The character of the ancient Scaldic poetry is various. It is often, especially when mythological, so extremely obscure, that it defies interpretation. This seems to proceed chiefly from the metaphorical and paraphrastic style, which was considered as an high ornament in such compositions. Instead of giving the name of a person mentioned, it is the fashion to call him the son of such a one, or the brother or the spouse of such another; and as the said father, brother, or wife, had probably fifty names, it became extremely difficult, in many cases, to hit upon the individual who is intended. In like manner, a ship is the sea serpent, or the rider of the wave, or the *ask* or water-newt, or something else which still less readily conveys the meaning. In poems composed in this style, it seems to have been the object of the poet to convert every line into a sort of riddle, for the exercise of the ingenuity of the hearer, who was thus obliged to fight his way from one verse to another, having, for his sole reward, the pleasure of penetrating mystery, and conquering studied obscurity. Great part of the Edda of Sæmund is involved in this artificial darkness, and is therefore positively untranslateable. But in the more popular poetry, the romances, war-odes, and songs sung to the great in their festivals, when their Honours, like Mungo in the farce, probably wished to hear something which they could understand, another and more simple kind of poetry was adopted. The following very singular poem affords a curious specimen of this latter kind of composition; for though the personages are mythological, yet the tale is romantic, and the style of a simple kind, adapted to general comprehension. It is called the song of Thrym, or the Recovery of the Hammer, from the principal personage and incident. This hammer was a sort of sceptre or mace, used by Thor, the Mars of the Scandinavians, and on which much of his power depended. It was probably like those maces of arms which were used in war as low as the

middle of the seventeenth century.* The translation is so admirably executed, that it might be mistaken for an original.

"Wrath waxed Thor, when his sleep was flown,
And he found his trusty hammer gone:
He smote his brow, his beard he shook,
The son of earth 'gan round him look;
And this the first word that he spoke;
'Now listen what I tell thee, Loke;
Which neither on earth below is known,
Nor in Heaven above; my hammer's gone.'
Their way to Freyia's bower they took,
And this the first word that he spoke;
'Thou, Freyia, must lend a winged robe,
To seek my hammer round the globe.'

FREYIA *sung.*

'That shouldst thou have, though 'twere of gold,
And that, though 'twere of silver, hold.'
Away flew Loke; the wing'd robe sounds,
Ere he has left the Asgard grounds,
And ere he has reached the Jotunheim bounds.
High on a mound in haughty state
Thrym the King of the Thursi sate;
For his dogs he was twisting collars of gold,
And trimming the manes of his coursers bold.

THRYM *sung.*

'How fare the Asi? the Alfi how?
Why com'st thou alone to Jotunheim now?

LOKE *sung.*

'Ill fare the Asi; the Alfi mourn;
Thor's hammer from him thou has torn.'

THRYM *sung.*

'I have the thunderer's hammer bound,
Fathoms eight beneath the ground;
With it shall no one homeward tread,
Till he bring me Freyia to share my bed.'
Away flew Loke; the wing'd robe sounds,
Ere he has left the Jotunheim bounds,
And ere he has reach'd the Asgard grounds.
At Midgard Thor met crafty Loke,
And this the first word that he spoke;
'Have you your errand and labour done?
Tell from aloft the course, you run.
For setting oft the story fails,
And lying oft the lie prevails.'

LOKE *sung.*

'My labour is past, mine errand I bring;
Thrym has thine hammer, the giant king;

* Lithgow, the Scottish traveller, mentions maces as used by the English at the seige of Newcastle, in 1646, of which he gives a very curious account.

With it shall no one homeward tread,
Till he bear him Freyia to share his bed.'
Their way to lovely Freyia they took,
And this the first word that he spoke;
'Now, Freyia, busk, as a blooming bride;
Together, we must, to Jotunheim ride.'
Wrath waxed Freyia with ireful look;
All Asgard's hall with wonder shook;
Her great bright necklace started wide.
'Well may ye call me a wanton bride,
If I with ye to Jotunheim ride.'
The Asi did all to council crowd,
The Asiniæ all talk'd fast and loud;
This they debated, and this they sought,
How the hammer of Thor should home be brought.
Up then and spoke Heimdallar free,
Like the Vani, wise was he;
'Now busk me Thor as a bride so fair;
Let him that great bright necklace wear;
Round him let ring the spousal keys,
And a maiden kirtle hang to his knees,
And on his bosom jewels rare;
And high and quaintly braid his hair.'
Wrath waxed Thor with godlike pride;
'Well may the Asi me deride,
If I let me be dight as a blooming bride.'
Then up spoke Loke, Laufeyia's son;
'Now hush thee, Thor; this must be done:
The giants will strait in Asgard reign:
If thou thine hammer dost not regain.'
Then busk'd they Thor as a bride so fair,
And the great bright necklace gave him to wear;
Round him let ring the spousal keys,
And a maiden kirtle hang to his knees,
And on his bosom jewels rare;
And high and quaintly braided his hair.
Up then arose the crafty Loke,
Laufeyia's son, and thus he spoke;
'A servant I thy steps will tend,
Together we must to Jotunheim wend.'
Now home the goats together hie;
Yoked to the axle they swiftly fly.
The mountain shook, the earth burn'd red,
As Odin's son to Jotunheim sped.
Then Thrym the king of the Thursi said;
'Giants, stand up; let the seats be spread;
Bring Freyia Niorder's daughter down
To share my bed from Noatun.
With horns all gilt each cool-black beast
Is led to deck the giant's feast;
Large wealth and jewels have I stored;
I lack but Freyia to grace my board.'

Betimes at evening they approach'd,
And the mantling ale the giants broach'd.
The spouse of Sisia ate alone
Eight salmons, and an ox full grown,
And all the cates, on which women feed;
And drank three firkins of sparkling mead.
Then Thrym the king of the Thursi said;
'Where have ye beheld such a hungry maid?
Ne'er saw I bride so keenly feed,
Nor drink so deep of the sparkling mead.'
Then forward lent the crafty Loke,
And thus the giant he bespoke:
'Nought has she eat for eight long nights,
So did she long for the nuptial rites.'
He stoop'd beneath her veil to kiss,
But he started the length of the hall, I wiss,
'Why are the looks of Freyia so dire?
It seems, as her eyeballs glisten'd with fire.'
Then forward lent the craft Loke,
And thus the giant he bespoke;
'Nought has she slept for eight long nights,
So did she long for the nuptial rites.'
Then in the giant's sister came,
Who dared a bridal gift to claim;
Those rings of gold from thee I crave,
If thou wilt all my fondness have,
All my love and fondness have.'
Then Thrym the king of the Thursi said;
'Bear in the hammer to plight the maid;
Upon her lap the bruizer lay,
And firmly plight our hands and fay.'*
The thunderer's soul smiled in his breast,
When the hammer hard on his lap was placed;
Thrym first the king of the Thursi he slew,
And slaughter'd all the giant crew.
He slew that giant's sister old,
Who pray'd for bridal gifts so bold.
Instead of money and rings, I wot,
The hammer's bruises were here her lot,
Thus Odin's son his hammer got." Vol. i, p. 1-8.

* *Faith.*

In this little tale, the genius of the rude people, for whom it was composed, may easily be recognized. We were very much amused with the brutal stupidity of the giant, a quality which seems always to have been an attribute of the sons of Anak, with the rival obtuseness of intellect displayed by the godlike Thor, who, like Ajax, seems to have "worn his brains in his belly, and his guts in his head;" and above all with the insinuating address of the crafty Loke, who devised such marvellous good apologies for the circumstances in the bride's conduct, which excited poor Thrym's astonish-

ment. The whole is a very curious specimen of the northern romance. The notes upon it, and indeed throughout, display an intimate acquaintance with Scandinavian lore, and lead us to expect with anxiety a promised dissertation upon the ancient history and literature of Iceland.

The other translations are less generally interesting than those from the Icelandic. There is, however, one poem from the Danish, which we transcribe as an instance how very closely the ancient popular ballad of that country corresponds with our own. It is said to have been taken down in the 17th century from oral recitation, and that the old people at Hoybye then pointed out the scene of the disastrous event, and the hill upon which divine service was performed, till the Pope recalled the interdiction.

" Sir Ebba lett bigg a bower so tall;
  As still each native knows,
There sing the small thrush and the nightingale,
  Two damsels within it repose.

Sir Ebba he must to Iceland go
  To bear his lord's behest;
That bower, I ween, his daughters two
  Will find no place of rest.

Sir Bonda and Sir Schinnild there
  Leagued with their mother came,
To harm Sir Ebba's daughters fair,
  And work them scath and shame.

The younger brother trembled sore
  To work the damsels' shame,
' Come Sir Ebba in peace to his native shore,
  He venges his daughter's fame.'

Then pale and wan grew his mother's face,
  And savage wax'd her heart.
' Thou bear'st not the soul of thy father's race,
  But play'st a coward's part.

There's none within to check your might
  Beside two varlets small;
And, were they both in iron dight,
  They must before you fall.'

Early in the morning
  They whet the shining spear;
At the close of evening
  Before the bower appear.

Under the lofty chamber's tier
  In rush'd the knights amain;

They ask no leave, they know no fear,
  But fast the chamber gain.

Up then awoke those ladies fair
  To guard their maiden pride;
Sir Bonda and Sir Schinnild there
  Lay by their snowy side.

The damsels wept full bitterly
  With many a maiden tear;
And pray'd them for their modesty
  To dread their father dear.

Up rose the knights; and went forth, ere
  Day lit the mountain's side;
They thank'd for what they gain'd by fear,
  But dared not longer bide.

The younger sister wailed soon,
  For she fell first to shame;
'Let us sink with a stone in the billows down,
  And bury our blighted fame.'

The elder sister answer'd strait;
  'Nay, gentle sister, nay,
Our sire from Iceland we'll await;
  He'll venge us, if he may.'

It was the good Sir Ebba there,
  From Iceland home he came;
To meet him both his daughters fair
  All weeping went with shame.

'Now welcome, welcome, father dear;
  So sore for you we cried;
Sir Bonda and Sir Schinnild here
  Have stained our maiden pride.'

Sir Ebba's heart wax'd sore with wo,
  To hear their mournful plight;
And, 'Ill to Iceland did I go;
  Now come the deadly fight!'

'You must not for our ravish'd fame
  Bear helm and weapons keen;
We will by craft avenge our shame,
  Though reft of honor sheen.'

It falls upon a Christmas night,
  To mass the people hies;
Betimes to whet their daggers bright
  Sir Ebba's daughters rise.

Now shall Sir Ebba's daughters do
  A deed of scath, I ween;
But they must not to the altar go
  Without their weapons keen.

Lady Metelill smiled, and a glowing hue
Gleam'd under her rosy skin;
And, 'Stand ye up, like ladies true!
Let the brides of my children in!

Sir Bonda and Sir Schinnild there
To join the mass had sped;
And Trunda young, and Zenild fair,
Did fast behind them tread.

North within the armory bright
Young Trunda drew her blade;
South before the altar's light
Sir Bonda's fallen dead.

South beside the altar's ledge
Fair Zenild drew her knife;
North upon the grunsel edge
Sir Schinnild lost his life.

'Here stand we now as widows two,
For neither is now a maid;
And, lady, take your children two
To eat with salt and bread!'

Seven winters o'er that mournful place
Sad interdiction hung;
Nor rite was done, nor holy mass,
Nor funeral anthem sung.

On Helen's hill was a chapel built,
And there went woman and man;
Till the Pope absolved the church from guilt,
And loosed the fatal ban."—Vol. i, p. 22-28.

In this curious specimen of the Northern ballad the traces of a very rude age may be discovered. The nature of the vengeance which Lady Metelill stimulates her sons to take upon the defenceless daughters of Sir Ebba, and the exulting insults with which she receives them at the church, are circumstances to be referred to a remote period of antiquity, and almost a savage state of manners. But we were most struck with its extreme resemblance, in style and structure, to the old ballads of our own country, which have been very dexterously preserved by the translator. We hope Mr. Herbert will not confine his future researches to the Icelandic poetry, but will extend them to the popular poetry of Scandinavia, which we cannot help thinking is the real source of many of the tales of our minstrels. That there was a ready intercourse between the Northern romancers, and their brethren of the South, is evident from the titles of many of the MSS. which Wanley enumerates in his catalogue,

as, for example, Sagun af Kerla Magnuse og Koppum Hans, *i. e.* the History of Charlemagne, and his Paladins; Sagan af Ivant Einglands Kappe, that is, the adventures of Sir Ywain, a champion of the Round Table, and others, whose titles obviously denote an English or French original. But on the other hand, we suspect that our stock of popular poetry and even that of the Anglo-Normans, was much enriched by the Northern traditions. Ugger, or Ogier the Dane, as he is called by the French romancers, however he came to be accounted one of Charlemagne's Paladins, has evidently derived his original renown from some Northern Saga. In King Lear, among other scraps of old songs quoted by Edgar, in his assumed madness, we have this fragment:—

> "Child Rowland to the dark tower came,
> - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
> The word was still fee faw fum,
> I smell the blood of a Christian man."

The ballad or romance to which this quotation belongs, is to be found in the Kæmpe Visier, a Danish collection of ancient popular poetry, which we would beg leave to recommend particularly to the learned translator of Sir Ebba. Proud Ellen Lyle had been carried off by a sort of sea monster or demon, called Rosmer; and, like Chrystalline la Curieuse, in Count Hamilton's tales, was immured by him in an enchanted dwelling. Her brother, Rowland, having traversed the seas in quest of her, at length arrives at the place of her confinement, and she conceals him to prevent his being put to death by Rosmer. When that demon arrives, he greets his affrighted spouse with the two last lines of gigantic ejaculation—

> "Fee faw fum!
> I smell the blood of a Christian man."

This curious old ballad has been lately translated by Mr. Robert Jamieson of Riga, and published in a collection of Scottish ballads, with one or two others, which tend strongly to prove, that much of our popular minstrelsy was of Danish, at least of Scandinavian origin.

We have been so copious in our extracts from the Northern Poems, that we have little time to notice the others. Mr. Herbert, from the formation of his style, seems to succeed best in those which he takes from the German.

There is a very good translation of the Blandiné and Lenardo of Bürger, which is impressive, although strongly marked with the taste for outrageous sensibility, which disgraces most German poetry. The story is that of Tancred and Sigismunda; but Bürger, though he borrowed liberally, and without acknowledgement, from the English authors,* was unable to reach the manly vigour of Dryden, and therefore balladized the old tale as he found it in Boccacio. We are surprised to find, that some of our brother reviewers, upon the slight foundation of a verse or two in this translation, have taxed Mr. Herbert with favouring revolutionary and levelling opinions. We should think it difficult to read far in his book, without seeing traces of very opposite politics, and would be more apt to number this ingenious poet with a party who must be allowed to possess a large share of literary merit, and of whom a professed dislike to innovation has been the leading and distinguishing principle.

In the translations from the Spanish and Italian, we are chiefly displeased with a want of pliability, as it were, in Mr. Herbert's language. It seems as if he had laboured among the rugged rhymes of the Scalds, until his style had become too rigid for transfusing the elegance and melody of the Southern poetry.

The original poetry with which these translations are interspersed, displays no peculiar vigour of imagination. Indeed, the author has in general chosen subjects which have been too frequently the theme of the Muses to admit of any great novelty in the mode of treating them. Thus, we have an Ode to Despair, in the first volume, very well executed for that kind of composition; but we have now seen so many of these addresses to personified passions, and are so much accustomed to the routine of their being supplied with appropriate amusements, and a suitable pedigree, that a disagreeable and unimpressive similarity is their principal characteristic.

Yet there are several instances of great felicity of expression in these original pieces; and we think the author

* Witness his generously adopting Bishop Percy's beautiful ballad of the Child of Elle, and having bestowed upon fair Ellen and her lover, the sounding names of Ritter Karl von Eichenhorst, and Fraulein Gertrude von Hochburg, his very gravely calling it an ancient German Tale.

excels in that very difficult class of which love is the subject. There is an elegance in some of these little pieces, which deserts him in his more sublime efforts; and, very contrary to the meretricious effusions of contemporary bards, we remark, with pleasure, that the passion which his verses express, is that pure and virtuous affection which sublimes and refines all that is connected with it. The piece, upon the whole, which we are inclined to consider as decidedly unworthy of the others, is a ballad called William Lambert —a Tale, which the author seems to have suspected was too simple for publication. But, however true and pleasing the incident which it contains, the account of a boy relieved from beggary by the liberality of the Lady Margaret, and who prefers being a gardener to going to sea, cannot be considered as generally interesting. In some of the verses, the author has in fact slid into that style of tawdry and affected simplicity, which we should have thought that he who has studied popular poetry upon the manliest models, would, of all persons, have been most likely to imitate. The choice of the orphan to stay with Lady Margaret, is, for example thus expressed.

" The little boy he hied him in,
And busk'd him in the hall;
And soon he was all trimly dight,
And waxed stout withal.

' A boon (he cried), fair Lady mine!
O send me not to sea!
For thou must be mine only friend,
And I must bide with thee.

' O let me here thy garden tend,
Hard by this pleasant bower;
Here deck the lawn with careful hand,
And rear each scented flower:

' The soft primrose, the violet blue,
The glowing celandine;
And cuckoo-buds, and sorrel pale,
And luscious sweet woodbine.' "—Vol. ii, p. 86.

This is not genuine ballad poetry, which Mr. Herbert can write when he pleases; but that spurious kind, which trickles through the Sir Eldreds of the Bower,* and other legendard ditties of the eighteenth century. It is the very last refuge of those who can do nothing better in the shape of verse; and a man of genius should disdain to invade the province of these dawdling rhymers.

* [Sir Eldred was an early performance of Mrs. Hannah More.]

EVANS'S OLD BALLADS.*

[Quarterly Review, May, 1810.]

We class these publications together, as being a species which characteristic simplicity and the powerful union of music render generally acceptable, as well to high-born dames in bower and hall, as to "the free maids that weave their thread with bones."

The reviver of minstrel poetry in Scotland was the venerable Bishop of Dromore, who, in 1765, published his elegant collection of heroic ballads, songs, and pieces of early poets, under the title of Reliques of Ancient English Poetry. The plan of the work was adjusted in concert with Mr. Shenstone, but we own we cannot regret that the execution of it devolved upon Dr. Percy alone. It was divided into three volumes, each forming a distinct series of ancient poetry, selected with classical elegance, and interspersed with modern imitations and specimens of lyric composition. The various subdivisions of the work were prefaced by critical and curious dissertations upon subjects connected with or tending to elucidate the ancient ballads which they preceded. The arrangement of the specimens was so managed as to exhibit the gradation of language, the progress of popular opinions, the manners and customs of former ages, and the obscure passages of our earlier classical poets. The plan of this publication was eminently calculated to remove the principal obstacle which the taste of the period offered to its success. To bring Philosophy from heaven to dwell among men, it was necessary to divest her of some of her more awful attributes, to array her doctrines in familiar language, and ren-

* *Old Ballads, Historical, &c.* By Thomas Evans. *Revised, &c. by his Son,* R. H. Evans. 4 vols: *And Vocal Poetry, or a select Collection of English Songs. To which is prefixed an Essay on Song Writing.* By John Aikin, M. D.

der them evident by popular illustration. But Dr. Percy had a different course to pursue when conducting Legendary Lore from stalls and kitchens and cottage chimneys, or, at best, from the dust, moths, and mould of the Pepysian or Pearsonian collections, to be an inmate of the drawing-room and the study. The attempt was entirely new, and the difficulties attending it arose from the fastidious taste of an age which was accustomed to receive nothing under the denomination of poetry, unrecommended by flowing numbers and elaborate expression. To soften these difficulties, Dr. Percy availed himself, to a considerable extent, of his own poetical talent, to alter, amend, and decorate the rude popular rhymes, which, if given to the public with scrupulous fidelity, would probably have been rejected with contempt and disgust. It was not, then, so much the question whether an ancient poem was authentic according to the letter, as whether it was or could be rendered worth reading; and it might be said of Dr. Percy's labours as an editor, *nihil quod tetigit non ornavit.* It may be asked by the severer antiquary of the present day, why an editor, thinking it necessary to introduce such alterations, in order to bring forth a new, beautiful, and interesting sense from a meagre or corrupted original, did not, in good faith to his readers, acquaint them with the liberties he had taken, and make them judge whether in so doing he transgressed his limits. We answer, that unquestionably such would be the express duty of a modern editor, but such were not the rules of the service when Dr. Percy first opened the campaign. His avowal of alterations, additions, and conjectural emendations, at the bottom of each page, would have only led his readers to infer that his originals were good for nothing; not to mention that a great many of those additions derived their principal merit from being supposed ancient. In short, a certain conformity with the general taste was necessary to introduce a relish for the subject; accuracy and minute investigation of the original state of the ballads was likely to follow, and did follow so soon as the public ear had been won by the more elegant and polished edition of Dr. Percy. It had been well if the industrious Ritson, and other minute and accurate labourers in the mine of antiquity, had contented themselves with exhibiting specimens of the ore in its original state,

without abusing the artist who had made the vein worth digging, by showing to what its produce might be refined

The Reliques of Ancient English Poetry seem, shortly after their publication, to have exceeded even the expectation of the editor in giving a strong and determined impulse to public taste and curiosity, the effects of which have only abated within these very few years. Mr. Thomas Evans, bookseller, was the first who endeavoured to avail himself of the taste which they had excited, by publishing the collection of which his son has now given us a second edition.

This publication, although intended as a supplement to the Reliques of Ancient Poetry, cannot be considered as continued upon the same plan. There are no dissertations prefixed, and the preliminary matter which prefaces the ballads is but meagre. The ballads themselves are chiefly such as the more cautious taste of Dr. Percy had left unpublished, either because their rude structure was incapable of decoration, or because they were so well known as to render decoration unadvisable. The principal source from which they were taken is a small publication in three volumes, 12mo, entitled *A Collection of old Ballads, corrected from the best and most ancient copies extant, with Introductions, historical, critical, or humorous: illustrated with copper-plates.* It is now, we believe, extremely rare, and sells at a price very disproportionate to its size. The volumes appeared separately, and from the edition now before us, the first seems to have been reprinted in 1723, the second in the same year, the third in 1725. The editor was an enthusiast in the cause of old poetry, and selected his matter without much regard to decency, as will appear from the following singular preface to one or two indelicate pieces of humour. "One of the greatest complaints made by the ladies against the first volume of our collection, and indeed the only one which has reached my ears, is the want of merry songs. I believe I may give a pretty good guess at what they call mirth in such pieces as these, and shall endeavour to satisfy them, though I have very little room to spare." From this fountain the late Mr. Evans seems to have drawn such supplies as it afforded. Most of his historical ballads are taken from it, and many of the tales of Robin Hood, although he probably used some of the Gar-

lands respecting the hero of Sherwood, in correcting and completing that series. In the present edition these are materially improved by comparison with and reference to the black-letter copies.

But although Mr. Evans did not imitate Dr. Percy in the more learned and critical department of his labour, and although he stands acquitted of having taken the same license with originals of acknowledged antiquity; yet he not only followed his plan in admitting the compositions of modern authors in imitation of the ancient ballad, but the third and fourth volumes of his works contain some pieces presented as ancient which, from the orthography, language, sentiments and numbers, are evidently spurious. These ballads, which we have always considered as the most valuable part of Mr. Evans's collection, as far as poetry is concerned, are Bishop Thurston and the King of Scots, Battle of Cuton Moor, Murder of Prince Arthur, Prince Edward and Adam Gordon, Cumner Hall, Arabella Stuart, Anna Bullen, The Lady and the Palmer, The Fair Maniac, the Bridal Bed, The Lordling Peasant, The Red-Cross Knight, the Wandering Maid, The Triumph of Death, Julia, The Fruits of Jealousy, The Death of Allen. These seventeen ballads, which we believe have never been published, except in this work, have a sort of family resemblance which indicates a common parent. The antique colouring in all of them originally consisted in the adoption of a species of orthography embarrassed with an unusual number of letters, and regularly *exchaungynge* the *i* for the *y* in the participle, which is, for further dignity, graced uniformly with a final *e*. These injudicious marks of imitation, which can no more render a modern ballad like an ancient than a decoction of walnuts can convert the features of an European into those of an Asiatic, are rejected by the present editor, Mr. R. H. Evans, who thus leads us to infer that he does not consider the poems we have enumerated as authentic remnants of antiquity. We wish he had favoured us with some light upon their history. They appear to us to be the work of an author endowed with no small portion of poetical genius. Many marks of haste appear in the composition, which the writer probably considered as of little importance, since he never intended to be responsible for his offspring. But there are touches of great beauty of description, and an expression of sentiment peculiarly soft,

simple, and affecting in almost every one of these neglected legends. The knowledge of history, too, which they display, argues that the author mingled the pursuits of the antiquary with those of the poet, and was enabled, by the information so collected, to realize and verify the conceptions of his imagination when employed upon the actual manners and customs of the feudal ages. To vindicate our eulogium, we beg leave to quote a few stanzas from the tale entitled the Bridal Bed.

"It was a maid of low degree
  Sat on her true-love's grave,
And with her tears most piteously
  The green turf she did lave;
She strew'd the flow'rs, she pluck'd the weed,
  And show'rs of tears she shed:
'Sweet turf,' she cried, 'by fate decreed
  To be my bridal bed!

'I've set thee, flow'r, for that the flow'r
  Of manhood lieth here;
And water'd thee with plenteous show'r
  Of many a briny tear.'
And still she cried, 'Oh stay, my love,
  My true-love, stay for me;
Stay till I've deck'd my bridal bed,
  And I will follow thee.

'Sweet turf, thy green more green appears,
  Tears make thy verdure grow,
Then still I'll water thee with tears,
  That thus profusely flow.
Oh stay for me, departed youth,
  My true-love, stay for me;
Stay till I've deck'd my bridal bed,
  And I will follow thee.

'This is the flow'ry wreath he wove,
  To deck his bride, dear youth!
And this the ring with which my love
  To me did plight his troth;
And this dear ring I was to keep,
  And with it to be wed—
But here, alas! I sigh and weep
  To deck my bridal bed.'

A blithsome knight came riding by,
  And, as the bright moon shone,
He saw her on the green turf lie,
  And heard her piteous moan;
And loud she cried, 'Oh stay, my love,
  My true-love, stay for me;
Stay till I've deck'd my bridal bed,
  And I will follow thee.'

'Be calm, fair maid,' the knight replied,
  'Thou art too young to die;
But go with me, and be my bride,
  And leave the old to sigh.'
But still she cried, 'Oh stay, my love,
  My true-love, stay for me;
Stay till I've deck'd my bridal bed,
  And I will follow thee.'

'Oh leave,' he cried 'this grief so cold,
  And leave this dread despair,
And thou shalt flaunt in robes of gold,
  A lady rich and fair:
Thou shalt have halls and castles fair:
  And when, sweet maid, we wed,
Oh, thou shalt have much costly gear,
  To deck thy bridal bed.'

'Oh hold thy peace, thou cruel knight,
  Nor urge me to despair;
With thee my truth I will not plight,
  For all thy proffers fair:
But I will die with my own true-love—
  My true-love, stay for me;
Stay till I've deck'd my bridal bed,
  And I will follow thee.

'Thy halls and castles I despise,
  This turf is all I crave;
For all my hopes, and all my joys,
  Lie buried in this grave;
I want not gold, nor costly gear,
  Now my true-love is dead;
But with fading flower and scalding tear
  I deck my bridal bed.'

'Oh! be my bride, thou weeping fair,
  Oh! be my bride, I pray;
And I will build a tomb most rare,
  Where thy true-love shall *lay*:'
But still with tears she cried, 'My love,
  My true-love, stay for me;
Stay till I've deck'd my bridal bed,
  And I will follow thee.'

'My love needs not a tomb so rare,
  In a green grave we will lie;
Our carved works—these flow'rets fair,
  Our canopy—the sky.
Now go, sir knight, now go thy ways—
  Full soon I shall be dead—
And then return, in some few days,
  And deck my bridal bed.

'And strew the flower, and pluck the thorn,
  And cleanse the turf, I pray;

So may some hand thy turf adorn,
When thou in grave shall *lay;*
But stay, oh thou whom dear I love,
My true-love, stay for me;
Stay till I have deck'd my bridal bed,
And I will follow thee.' "

This dirge is certainly not ancient; but it is no treason to say it is better than if it were. We cannot suppress a suspicion that these legendary pieces flowed from the pen of a poet to whom neither his own nor this generation has been altogether just. We mean William Julius Mickle, the translator of the Lusiad. His Sir Martyn, written in imitation of Spenser's manner, with much of the copious and luxuriant description of his original, shows his attachment to the study of the ancient poetry of Britain; and his two beautiful ballads, entitled Hengist and Mey, and the Sorceress, have the same harmony of versification, the same simple and affecting turn of expression, with the imitations of the heroic legend which we are now considering. If Mr. Mickle should have been a friend of the elder Mr. Evans, as we believe, we consider that circumstance, joined to internal evidence, as sufficient to ascertain his property in the ballads in question.

We have also to complain, that in publishing some other imitations of the ancient ballads, the authors' names have been withheld where, perhaps, they were more easily attainable than in the case just stated. Thus the ingenious Mr. Henry Mackenzie (author of the Man of Feeling) is well known to have written the beautiful Scottish ballad entitled Kenneth; and Michael Bruce that of Sir John Ross. The ballad of the Laidley Worm of Spindleston Heughs is also known to have been, in a very great measure, the production of the Rev. Mr. Lamb, late vicar of Norham, and editor of the Battle of Flodden-field. It is founded upon a prevailing tradition in Bamboroughshire, and the author has interwoven a few stanzas of the original song concerning it, which begins,

"Bambro' castle's built full high,
It's built of marble stone,
And lang lang may the lady wait
For her father's coming home," &c.

In revising his father's publication, Mr. R. Evans has, with great judgment, discarded a number of sing-song imitations of the ancient ballad by Jerningham, Robinson, and

other flimsy pretenders, who, seduced by the apparent ease of the task, ventured to lay their hand upon the minstrel lyre. For a different reason, he has omitted the contributions which his father levied upon Goldsmith, Gray, and other eminent moderns, whose works are in every one's hand. By this exclusion he has made room for a selection of genuine ancient poetry, compiled, by his own industry, from the hoarded treasures of black-letter ballads.

It is no disgrace to Mr. Evans, that these veterans, whom he has introduced to recruit his diminished ranks, are, generally speaking, more respectable for their antiquity than for anything else. Percy, Ellis, and other editors of taste and genius, had long ago anticipated Mr. Evans's labours, and left him but the refuse of the market. Some of the ballads, indeed, exhibit such wretched doggerel as serves, more than the dissertations of a thousand Ritsons, to degrade the character of our ancient song inditers.

The "Warning to Youth," for example, "shewing the lewd life of a merchant's sonne of London, and the misery that at the last he sustained by his notoriousnesse," might, notwithstanding the valuable moral attached to it, have been left, without injury to the public, to "dust and mere oblivion." Had we known Mr. Evans's curiosity in such matters, we could have supplied him with as much stale poetry of a similar description as would have made his four volumes twenty.

But although Mr. Evans's love of antiquity has occasionally seduced him into publishing what is no otherwise valuable than as it is old, a prejudice by which all antiquarian editors are influenced in a greater or less degree, we have to applaud the diligence with which he has traced and recovered some beautiful and some curious pieces of poetry, which possess intrinsic merit and interest. Among the former we distinguish the address to a disappointed, or rather a forsaken lover, which has, we think, a turn of passion that is new, upon a very threadbare subject.

"I am so farre from pittying thee,
That wear'st a branch of willow tree,
That I do envie thee and all,
That once were high and got a fall:
O willow, willow, willow tree,
I would thou didst belong to mee.

That wearing willow doth imply,
That thou art happier farre than I,

For once thou wert where thou wouldst be,
Though now thou wear'st the willow tree:
  O willow, willow, sweete willow,
  Let me once lie upon her pillow.

I doe defie both boughe and roote,
And all the fiends of hell to boote;
One houre of paradised joye,
Makes purgatorie seeme a toye:
  O willow, willow, doe thy worst,
  Thou canst not make me more accurst.

I have spent all my golden time,
In writing many a loving rime;
I have consumed all my youth
In vowing of my faith and trueth:
  O willow, willow, willow tree,
  Yet can I not beleeved bee.

And now alas it is too late,
Gray hares, the messengers of fate,
Bid me to set my heart at rest,
For beautie loveth young men best:
  O willow, willow, I must die,
  Thy servant's happier farre then I."

The "Symptoms of Love," p. 246, is another very pretty song, and there are many scattered through the volumes which have considerable elegance of expression, or a quaintness rendered venerable by antiquity, and which, like the grotesque carving on a gothic niche, has a pleasing effect, though irreconcilable with the strict rules of taste.

These praises apply chiefly to the songs and minor pieces of lyrical poetry. The only ancient ballad, actually connected with history and manners, which Mr. Evans's labours have presented to us for the first time, is the murder of the Wests, by the sons of the Lord Darsy. Its chief merit is its curiosity.

Among the poems which are deservedly inserted, we cannot help remarking that entitled "The Felon Sow and the Freeres of Richmond," as belonging to a class of compositions which has been but lightly discussed by our antiquaries—we mean the burlesque romance of the middle ages, with which, doubtless, the minstrel and tale-teller relieved the uniformity of their heroic ditties. In these ludicrous poems, which are a kind of parody upon the metrical romances, churchmen and peasants are introduced imitating the knightly pastimes of chivalry; and their awkward mishaps and absurd blunders must have been matter of

excellent mirth to the doughty knights and gallant barons who listened to the tale. Thus, in the case before us, the felon sow was the undisturbed tenant of the woods of Rokeby, and the romantic banks of the Greta—her size and ferocity are described with great emphasis. The Lord of Rokeby, a man of humour, gave her to the Friars of Richmond, provided they could catch her. Friar Middleton sets off with two wight men at musters to possess himself of the prize. They compel the sow to take refuge in a limekiln, where they hamper her with cords from above; but the felon sow breaks forth upon them, routs the escort, reduces the friar to conjuration out of his breviary, and at length to betake himself to a tree. Friar Middleton and his companions return in evil plight to the convent; and the warden, to redeem the disgrace, hires two bold men-at-arms to follow forth the adventure of the sow. They enter into solemn indenture to "bide and fight" to the death; and the warden, on his part, becomes bound to say masses for their souls if they miscarry. The men-at-arms, more successful than Friar Middleton, vanquish and kill the felon sow; and the convent sing "Te Deum" merrily, "that they had won the beast of price."

> "If you will any more of this,
> In the Friery at Richmond written it is,
> In parchment good and fine,
> How Freer Middleton so hende,
> At Greta Bridge conjured a fiend,
> In likenesse of a swine."*

This tale, which possesses some portion of Cervantic humour, resembles the "Tournament of Tottenham," (see Percy's Reliques, vol. ii,) in which the peasants of a village are introduced imitating all the solemnities of a tournament, and battering each other's heads with flails, as knights did with long swords and maces. Another remarkable example of this class of comic romances is entitled, "The Hunting of the Hare." A yeoman, having found a hare sitting in the common field of a village, announces his discovery to the inhabitants. The peasants, resolving to course her, bring to the spot their great yard-dogs and mastiffs, "with short shanks, and never a tail." The con-

* [See the verses at length, in the Notes to the fifth canto of the poem of *Rokeby*.]

fusion and disarray which follow the congregating of this ill-assorted pack is described with great humour. The ban-dogs, more addicted to war than sport, fall foul of each other—their masters are gradually involved in the quarrel—and poor puss steals away, leaving her enemies engaged in a grand scene of worrying and wrangling. This poem has never, we believe, been printed. We could add largely to these examples, and show that low romance formed a distinct style of composition during the middle ages; but we have already exceeded our bounds, and must dismiss Mr. Evans's publication, which, always curious, has been greatly improved by his personal taste and labour.

The next articles in our title, which are allied in subject to the Collection of Ballads, are two editions of the same work—Dr. Aikin's well-known collection of songs, with the preliminary essay. Mr. Evans, it seems from his preface, considered Dr. Aikin to have given up any intention of reprinting his collection.

"The many years which have elapsed since the publication of the last edition, seemed to leave no hope that Dr. Aikin could be prevailed on to gratify the public by a revision and enlargement of his work. He had declined the task in the prime and vigour of life; and he might now think it unbecoming his years, to engage in a republication of these *nugæ canoræ*. *Turpe senilis amor*, the Doctor might exclaim; and though he might be pleased to see his volume ranged by the side of those of Percy, Ellis, and some other similar publications, yet he has abandoned the friendly office of revision to other hands."

Mr. Evans has, however, reckoned without his host in this matter, and we are sorry that he did not take some more certain means of ascertaining the Doctor's intentions, considering his own labours; for we are not to suppose, that one who is an editor, as well as a bookseller, would have so far neglected the *comitas* due to a brother author, as to publish against him a rival edition of his own work. Dr. Aikin prefaces his edition with the following account of his motives:—

"As inquiries were still, from time to time, made after it among the booksellers, the editor was asked the question whether he had any intention of reprinting it; accompanied with the intimation, that, as the copy-right was expired, should he decline the business, others would be ready to undertake it. Conscious that the essays were the juvenile attempts of one whose taste was by no means matured, and whose critical knowledge was circumscribed within

narrow limits, the editor was unwilling that his book should again be given to the public with all its imperfections on its head. He was obliged, therefore, to declare, that if it were reprinted at all, it should be with many material alterations, corresponding to his own change of taste and opinion in various points during so long an interval.

"Under these almost compulsory circumstances, although he perhaps should not now have chosen for the first time to appear as the collector of productions, the general strain of which is more suitable to an earlier period of life, yet he thought he might, without impropriety, avail himself of the opportunity of making a new and much more extensive selection of compositions, which will not cease to be favourites with the lovers of elegant poetry, whatever be the vicissitudes of general taste."

In the singular predicament of reviewing two rival editions of the same work, and without pretending to give a decision against Mr. Evans, although we think he has treated Dr. Aikin with somewhat less attention than his age, situation, and talents perhaps demanded, we cannot regret that we are possessed of both editions of the book, and trust, that (as the old song runs) " the world's wide and there's room for them all." We are particularly glad to have an opportunity of comparing Dr. Aikin's original ideas upon the subject of song writing with those which he has since adopted. His four essays upon songs in general, upon ballads and pastoral songs, upon passionate and descriptive songs, upon ingenious and witty songs, are now blended into one general essay; but we love the classical turn of these little discourses so well, that we are glad they are preserved in their original state. Such directions and rules of composition, whether in their separate and detailed, or in their new moulded shape, were never more necessary than at the present day. The marriage between harmony and "immortal verse" has, like fashionable wedlock, frequently made some very ill-matched pairs; and we suspect that poetry must soon sue for a separate maintenance. The ladies, who ought, in common charity, to feel for her situation, are those who aggravate her hardships; for it is rare to hear a fair songstress utter the words of the song which she quavers forth. But where taste and feeling for poetry happen to be united with a sweet and flexible voice, it is scarcely possible to mention a higher power of imparting and heightening social pleasure. We have heard Dr. Aikin's simple ballad, "It was a winter's evening, and fast came down the snow,"

set by Dr. Clarke, sung with such beautiful simplicity as to draw tears even from the eyes of reviewers. But the consideration of modern song opens to the critic a stronger ground of complaint, from the degeneracy of the compositions which have been popular under that name. Surely it is time to make some stand against the deluge of nonsense and indecency which has of late supplanted, in the higher circles, the songs of our best poets. We say nothing of the "Nancies of the hills and vales." Peace to all such!—let the miller and apprentice have their ballad, and have it such as they can understand. Let the seaman have his "tight main-decker," and the countess her tinseled canzonet. But when we hear words which convey to every man, and we fear to most of the women in society, a sense beyond what effrontery itself would venture to avow; when we hear such flowing from the lips, or addressed to the ears of unsuspecting innocence, we can barely suppress our execration. This elegant collection presents, to those who admire music, a means of escaping from the too general pollution, and of indulging a pleasure which we are taught to regard as equally advantageous to the heart, taste, and understanding. Both editions are considerably enlarged by various songs extracted from the best modern poets, and in either shape the work maintains its right to rank as one of the most classical collections of songs in any language.

MOLIÈRE.*

[Foreign Quarterly Review, 1828.]

It will be universally admitted, that in tragic performances nothing can be more distinctly different than the laws which regulate the French and English stage. The dissimilarity is so great, that a native of either country, however candid or liberal, must have studied with some attention the literature of the other, to enable him, not merely to relish, but even to endure the tragedies of the neighbouring kingdom. A Parisian critic would be shocked at the representation of Hamlet *au naturel*, and the most patient spectator in a Drury Lane audience would incur some risk of dislocating his jaws with yawning, during the representation of a chef-d'œuvre of Racine or Corneille. This difference betwixt the taste of two highly civilized nations is not surprising, when we consider that the English tragedy existed a hundred years at least before the French, and is therefore censured by our neighbours as partaking, to a certain extent, of the barbarity and grossness of the age of Queen Elizabeth. The two great tragedians of France, on the contrary, had the task of entertaining a polished and highly ceremonious court, whose judgment was at least as fastidious as it was correct, and in whose eyes a breach of etiquette was a more formidable crime than any deficiency in spirit or genius.

Thus the English stage exhibited in word and in action every "change of many coloured life," mingled the tragic with the comic, the ludicrous with the horrible, seized by storm on the applause of the half-startled, half-affrighted audience, and presented to the judgment, like Salvator's

* *Augers' Edition of Molière*, 9 vols. 8vo. Paris, 1819–27; *and the Histoire de la Vie et des Ouvrages de* Moliere.—Par J. Taschereáu, Paris, 1825.

landscapes to the eye, a chaos of the wonderful, mixed with the grotesque, agitating the passions too strongly to leave time to inquire whether the rules of critical taste were not frequently violated. The French stage, on the other hand, is carefully and exactly limited by a sense of decorum, which, exercised in its rigour, may be called the tyranny of taste. It is not lawful to please, says this dramatic code, unless by observance of certain arbitrary rules, or to create a deeper and more intense interest, than a strict obedience to the precepts of Aristotle and his modern commentators will permit. The English authors have therefore preferred exhibiting striking incidents and extraordinary characters placed in violent contrast, at the risk of shocking probability; and their keenest partisans must own, that they have been often absurd, when they aimed at being sublime. The French, on the other hand, limiting themselves in general to long dramatic dialogues, in which passion is rather analyzed than displayed, have sometimes become tedious by a display of ingenuity, where the spectator expected touches of feeling. It follows as a matter of course, that each country, partial to the merits of its own style of amusement, and struck with the faults which belong to a cast of composition so extremely different, is as severe in censuring the foreign stage, as it is indulgent in judging of its own. Two important questions arise out of this: first, whether, considering the many differences betwixt the taste both of nations and individuals, either country is entitled to condemn with acrimony the favourite authors of the other, merely because they did not hit a mark against which they never directed their arrows? and, secondly, whether there may not remain to be trodden, by some splendid genius yet to be born, some middle path, which may attain the just mean betwixt that English freedom approaching to license, and the severe system of French criticism, that sometimes cramps and subjects the spirit which it is only designed to guide or direct?

Happily for us, our present subject does not require us to prosecute an inquiry so delicate as that which we have been led to touch upon. The difference in the national tastes of France and England, so very remarkable when we compare the tragedies of the two countries, is much less conspicuous in their comic dramas; where, setting aside their emancipation from the tenets of the Stagyrite, the English

comic writers do, or ought to, propose to themselves the same object with the French of the same class. As a proof of this, we may remark, that very few French tragedies have ever been translated, and of these few (the *Zaire* of Voltaire excepted) still fewer have become permanently popular, or have been reckoned stock-plays,—whereas the English authors, from the age of the great man of whom we are about to speak, down to the present day, have been in the habit of transferring to the British stage almost all the comedies which have been well received in France. How it happens that two nations which differ so much in their estimation of the terrible or the pathetic should agree so exactly in their sense of the gay, the witty, and the humorous, is a different question, which we are not called upon to discuss very deeply. Lord Chesterfield, however, has long since remarked (with the invidious intention of silencing an honest laugh) that laughter is a vulgar convulsion, common to all men, and that a ridiculous incident, such as the member of a company attempting to sit down when he has no chair behind him, will create a louder peal of mirth, than could be excited by the most brilliant sally of wit. We go no further with his lordship than to agree, that the sense of the comic is far more general among mankind, and far less altered and modified by the artificial rules of society, than that of the pathetic; and that a hundred men of different ranks, or different countries will laugh at the same jest, when not five of them perhaps would blend their tears over the same point of sentiment. Take, for example, the Dead Ass of Sterne, and reflect how few would join in feeling the pathos of that incident, in comparison with the numbers who would laugh in chorus till their eyes ran over at the too lively steed of the redoubtable John Gilpin. The moralist may regard this fact, either as a sign of our corrupted nature, to which the ludicrous feeling of the comic distress of a fellow-creature is more congenial than a sympathy with his actual miseries,—or as a proof of the kindness of Providence, which, placing us in a valley of sorrows, has enabled us, from our conformation, to be readily moved by such mirth-exciting circumstances as it affords, and by this propensity to counteract the depression of spirits occasioned by all that is gloomy and melancholy around us. To us it is enough to be assured that the universal sense of the humorous renders such a

complete master of comedy as Molière the property, not of that country alone which was honoured with his birth, but of the civilized world, and of England in particular, whose drama has been enriched by versions of so many of his best pieces.

As, however, we suspect that the history of this great author, the prince certainly of comic writers, is but little known to our English readers, we shall give a sketch of Molière's life, from the interesting and well-told narrative of his recent biographer, Mons. Taschereau.

Le Menteur of the great Corneille (known to the British reader under the title of *The Liar*), which appeared in 1642, was perhaps the first approach to the more just and elevated species of comedy. It was, however, a translation from the Spanish, and although it must be termed a comedy founded upon character, in which the whole incidents bear regularly on each other, and tend to enhance the ridicule attached to the foible of the hero, the plot has nevertheless a strong relish of the old Spanish school, which turned upon disguises, scaling ladders, dark-lanterns, and trap-doors. The comedies of *Don Bertrand de Cigaral*, and *Le Geolier de Soi-même*, composed by Thomas Corneille, are more distinctly and decidedly comedies of intrigue and bustle, similar to those borrowed from that exhaustless mine, the Spanish drama, where, generally speaking, at the expense of little save a wild imgination, the poet

> ——" fill'd the stage with all the crowd
> Of fools pursuing, and of fools pursu'd,
> Whose inns and outs no ray of sense discloses,
> Whose deepest plot is how to break folks' noses."

We may therefore say, that, relieved occasionally by the lively absurdity of the Italian farce, the comedy of intrigue, depending for its success upon mere stage-trick and stratagem, had usurped the place of that Thalia, who was to derive her interest by the lectures which she proposed to read upon the human heart and national manners. It was then that Molière arose, to whom we can scarcely hesitate to assign the first place amongst the comic writers of any age or nation.

Jean-Baptiste Poquelin was christened at Paris, 15th January, 1622. His family consisted of decent burghers, who had, for two or three generations, followed the business of

manufacturers of tapestry, or dealers in that commodity. Jean Poquelin, the father of the poet, also enjoyed the office of the valet-de-chambre in the royal household. He endeavoured to bring his son up to the same business, but finding that it was totally inconsistent with the taste and temper of the young Jean-Baptiste, he placed him at the Jesuits' college of Clermont, now the college of Louis-le-Grand. Young Poquelin had scarcely terminated his course of philosophy, when, having obtained the situation of assistant and successor to his father, in his post of valet-de-chambre to the king, he was called on to attend Louis XIII, on a tour to Narbonne, which lasted nearly a year. Doubtless, the opportunities which this journey afforded him, of comparing the manners and follies of the royal court and of the city of Paris, with those which he found still existing in the provincial towns and amongst the rural noblesse, were not lost upon the poet, by whose satirical powers they were destined to be immortalized.

On his return to Paris, young Poquelin commenced the study of the law; nay, it appears probable, that he was actually admitted an advocate. But the name of Molière must be added to the long list of those who have become conspicuous for success in the fine arts, having first adopted the pursuit of them in contradiction to the will of their parents, and in whom, according to Voltaire, nature has proved stronger than education.

Instead of frequenting the courts, Jean-Baptiste Poquelin was an assiduous attendant upon such companies of players as then amused the metropolis, and at length placed himself at the head of a society of young men, who began by acting plays for amusement, and ended by performing with a view to emolument. His parents were greatly distressed by the step he had taken. He had plunged himself into a profession which the law pronounced infamous, and nothing short of rising to the very top of it could restore his estimation in society. Whatever internal confidence of success the young Poquelin might himself feel, his chance of being extricated from the degradation to which he had subjected himself must have seemed very precarious to others; and we cannot be surprised that his relations were mortified and displeased with his conduct. To conciliate their prejudices as much as possible, he dropped the appellation of Poquelin,

and assumed that of Molière, that he might not tarnish the family name. But with what indifference should we now read the name of Poquelin, had it never been conjoined with that of Molière, devised to supersede and conceal it! It appears that the liberal sentiments of the royal court left Molière in possession of his office, notwithstanding his change of profession.

From the year 1646 to 1653, it is only known that Molière travelled through France as the manager of a company of strolling players. It is said, that with the natural turn of young authors, who are more desirous to combine scenes of strong emotion than of comic situation, he attempted to produce a tragedy called *The Thebaid.* Its indifferent success disgusted him with the buskin; and, it may be observed, that in proportion as he affects, in other compositions, anything approaching to the tragic, his admirable facility of expression seems to abandon him, and he becomes stiff and flat.

In the year 1653, Molière's brilliant comedy of *L'Etourdi* was performed at *Lyons*, and gave a noble presage of the talents of the illustrious author. The piece is known to English readers by a translation, entitled *Sir Martin Marplot*, made originally by the celebrated Duke of Newcastle, and adapted to the stage by the pen of Dryden. The piece turns upon the schemes formed by a clever and intriguing valet to facilitate the union betwixt his master and the heroine of the scene, all of which are successively baffled and disconcerted by the bustling interference of the lover himself. The French orignal has infinitely the superiority of the English imitation; not only as being the original, but because the character of the luckless lover is drawn with an exquisitely finer pencil. Lélie is an inconsequential, light-headed, gentleman-like coxcomb; but Sir Martin Marplot is a fool. In the English drama, the author seems to have considered his hero as so thoroughly stupid, that he rewards the address of the intriguing domestic with the hand of the lady. The French author gave no occasion for this gross indecorum. *L'Etourdi* was followed by *Le Dépit Amoureux*, an admirable entertainment; although the French critics bestow some censure on both for a carelessness of style, to which a foreigner may profess himself indifferent. Both these performances were received with the greatest applause

by numerous audiences; and as far as the approbation of provincial theatres could confer reputation, that of Molière was now established.

There was, however, a temptation, which threatened to withdraw him from the worship of Thalia. This was an offer on the part of the Prince of Conti, who had been his condisciple at college, to create Molière his secretary. He declined this, on account of his devoted attachment to his own profession, strengthened on this occasion, perhaps, by his knowledge how the place had become vacant. This, it seems, was by the death of Sarrasin (who had held the office), in consequence of *un mauvais traitement de Monseigneur le Prince de Conti*; in plain English, the prince had, with the fire-tongs, knocked down his secretary, who never recovered from the effects of the blow. It is probable that, notwithstanding the laurel chaplet worn by Molière, he had little faith in the *sic evitabile fulmen.*

This was in 1654. He continued to perambulate the provinces with his company for several years longer. In 1658 he returned to Paris; and at last, through the influence of his patron, the Prince of Conti, was introduced to Monsieur, the King's brother, and by him presented to the King and Queen. On the 24th of October, his company performed in the presence of the royal family, and he obtained the royal license to open a theatre under the title of *Troupe de Monsieur*, in opposition to, or in emulation of, the comedians of the Hôtel de Bourgogne. The pieces which Molière had already composed were received with great favour; but it was not until 1659, that he commenced the honourable satirical war with folly and affectation which he waged for so many years. It was then that he produced *Les Précieuses Ridicules.*

To understand the purpose of this satirical drama, the English reader must be informed, that there existed at Paris a coterie of women of rank, who pretended to the most exalted refinement of thought, expression, and sentiment. These were waited upon and worshipped by a certain number of men of fashion and several literary characters, who used towards them, in conducting their gallant intercourse, a peculiar strain of high-flown, pedantic gallantry, like that which was formerly in fashion in England, when every maid of honour spoke the affected jargon called Euphuism.

This society met in the Hôtel de Rambouillet, under the protection of the marchioness, its mistress. There were amongst them several persons of real wit and talent, a circumstance which only served to render the false taste which presided in the assembly more whimsically conspicuous. The language which the adepts of this sect piqued themselves on using, was a series of cold, far-fetched, extravagant metaphors and emblems, as remote from good taste as from common sense; and adorned with flights which resembled those of Cowley and Donne in their love verses. If wit, as Dr. Johnson observes of the metaphysical poets, consists in a combination of dissimilar images—a discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike—the conversation of the Hôtel de Rambouillet had more than enough of it. Their amorous intercourse was all in trope and figure; the more remote and extravagant, so much the more to be applauded. The land of gallantry was graphically illustrated as a country through which the pilgrim-lover travelled, possessing himself successively of the village of *billets-galans*, the hamlet of *billets-doux*, and the castle of *petits soins*. The expressions of real passion are always obvious and intelligible, but this pragmatical association made love without interest or concern; their courtship was void of tenderness—their sorrow could excite no sympathy;—it was sufficient that they said what had never, they hoped, been said before. The whole language, or rather jargon of the society, was a succession of enigmas, the sense of which much resembled the Highlandman's horse, that could not be taken without much labour, and when caught, was not worth the trouble it had given. A dictionary of this galimathias was published by Ribou, in 1661, from which, or some similar authority, Bret, the editor of Molière, quotes the tropes of rhetoric, which cannot easily be rendered into English. A night-cap was called (the reader must divine wherefore) *le complice innocent de mensonge*—a chaplet, *une chaine spirituelle*—water, *l'humeur celeste*—thieves, *les braves incommodes*, and a disdainful smile, *un bouillon d'orgueil*.

It might render this high strain of fashionable affectation more tolerable in one point of view, that the Cupid of the Hôtel de Rambouillet affected strict Platonism, nor was there indeed much danger to be anticipated to the honour of

families from the frigid affectation of his conceited jargon. The *fashion* had only the effect of making the young female aspirant treat with contempt the good man whom she chanced to call husband, for his total ignorance of the regular procedure in love matters. Such, at least, were the ostensible bounds within which these apish and fantastic tricks were practised; whether the limits were ever transgressed, is a question rather for the scandalous chronicle than the critic. To add singularity of manners to abstruseness of language and sentiment, the lady who entertained these coteries received the company in bed, and the company arranged themselves around her in the alcove where it was placed. Then flowed that inimitable tide of affected conversation, in which one ambiguous, tortuous and metaphysical conceit gave place to another still more obscure—where, by dint of what the circle termed delicacy of sentiment and felicity of expression, they became perfectly unintelligible, and language, instead of being put to its natural and legitimate purpose of asking and receiving information, was employed to give vent to all the nonsensical extravagances of a bizarre fancy, which resembled legitimate wit as little as a Will-of-the-Wisp is like the evening star. True wit, doubtless (but for the time distorted and abused) has some place in the coterie, since Sevigné, Menage, Deshouillères, L'Enclos, and other persons distinguished for talent, encouraged this absurd fashion; forgetting or neglecting the precept of a bard who himself seldom remembered it:—that it is better wit should not be displayed at all, than that every expression should be tortured into a witticism.

There could not be more legitimate food for satire than a system of solemn pedantic foppery, which its proselytes, in the extremity of self-conceit, considered as the most refined perfection in gallantry. While this ridiculous affectation was adopted by the learned and noble, and even by prelates as well as nobles, Molière, so lately the manager of a company of strolling players, was loading that piece, the discharge of which was to disperse this flock of jackdaws in borrowed feathers.

The title of his drama was taken from one of the rules of the society at the Hôtel de Rambouillet not yet alluded to. As the females were frozen towards their insipid gallants, they made amends by lavishing the extremity of ten-

der friendship upon each other. *Ma chère, ma précieuse,* were their usual terms of endearment, and from thence the title of *Les Précieuses Ridicules.* In this celebrated piece, Molière introduced two females (daughter and niece of a worthy burgess called Gorgibus), who having become infected with the false wit and gallantry of the *ruelles*, and having substituted, according to a fashion practised by the *élégantes* of the day, the sonorous names of *Aminte* and *Polixène* for their baptismal ones of Cathos and Madelon, with all the sentimental jargon which belonged to their new appellatives, have set themselves up as *précieuses* of the first class. They have, of course, a suitable contempt for honest Gorgibus, whose distress, perplexity, and resentment are extreme, and all occasioned by the perverse elegance of his womankind, who, in their attempts to emulate the follies and conceits of the incomparable Arthenice (a romantic epithet by which Madame de Rambouillet was distinguished, even in her funeral sermon), talk in a style which he cannot comprehend, and act in a manner that leads him to doubt their sanity of mind. The proposals of two gentlemen, approved by Gorgibus, who thought them fit matches for his damsels, have been rejected with such extremity of scorn by the two princesses, that the rejected suitors determine to revenge themselves, which they do by causing their two valets, impudent, conceited coxcombs of course, to be introduced to Aminte and Polixène, as men of fashion and quality. The *Précieuses* mistake the extravagant and absurd foppery, the second-hand airs of finery, and the vulgar impudence of the Marquis de Mascarille and the Vicomte de Jodelet, for the extremity of wit and gallantry: while the discovery, and the shame and confusion with which the unfortunate sentimentalists are overwhelmed, form the diverting conclusion of this amusing drama.

The piece was acted for the first time 18th November, 1659, and received with unanimous applause. The public, like children admitted behind the scenes, saw, with wonder and mirth, the trumpery which they had admired as crowns, sceptres, and royal robes, when beheld at a distance,—thus learning to estimate, at their real value, the affected airs of super-excellence and transcendental elegance assumed by the frequenters of the Hotel de Rambouillet.

On the other hand, the party who were consequently made

the laughing-stock of the theatre, were much hurt and offended, nor was the injury at all the lighter, that some of them had sense enough to feel that the chastisement was deserved. They had no remedy, however, but to swallow their chagrin, and call themselves by their own names in future. Menage expressed his own recantation in the words of Clovis, when he became a convert to Christianity, and told his assembled Franks they must now burn the idols which they had hitherto adored. The affectation of the period, such as we have described it, received a blow no less effectual than that which Ben Jonson, by his satire called "Cynthia's Revels," inflicted on the kindred folly of Euphuism; or as the author of "The Baviad and Mæviad" dealt to similar affectations of our own day. But Molière made a body of formidable enemies amongst the powerful and the learned, whose false pretensions to wit and elegance he had so rudely exposed.

Two things were remarkable as attending the representation of this excellent satire; first, that an old man, starting up in the paterre, exclaimed, "Courage, Molière, this is real comedy!" and, secondly, that the author himself, perceiving, from the general applause, that he had touched the true vein of composition, declared his purpose henceforward to read his lessons from the human bosom, instead of studying the pages of Terence and Plautus.

Les Précieuses Ridicules has been imitated by Shadwell with considerable success in his comedy of Bury-fair. And here we may remark, that M. Taschereau is led, probably from the example of most English authors, to speak of this dramatist with more contempt than he deserved. Shadwell was unfortunate in being placed in rivalry with Dryden, and still more so in becoming the object of his satire. But he had a strong sense of humour, and occasionally great power in expressing it. He was the Ben Jonson of his day, however inferior to him in genius; and as a painter of manners, his works ought not to be lost sight of by the English antiquary.

Molière next produced, in 1660, *Sganarelle*, ou *Le Cocu Imaginaire*. His biographer, like Master Ford, in the Merry Wives of Windsor, censures this second title as coarse and indelicate, unpleasing to the ear as the names of Amaimon, Lucifer, and Barbason. We trust that detestation of the vice has since Molière's time introduced among his

countrymen such laudable horror against the appellative of the principal sufferer. Since the days of the Italian novellieri, Boccacio, Bandello, and the rest, their tales of intrigue had been imitated in the Cent Nouvelles, the Tales of the Queen of Navarre, and other works of a similar kind. In all of these collections, the seductive intrigues, which carry dishonour and desolation into the bosom of families, had been exposed by the novelist, and listened to by their hearers, the courtiers of a licentious age, as fitting subjects for jest and raillery rather than crimes imperatively demanding censure. If Molière, on the present and future occasions, lent his admirable talents to the same depraved purpose of entertaining profligates by placing their guilt in a ludicrous point of view, Fortune reserved for him a severe retaliation, of which we shall speak hereafter.

After an unsuccessful effort at a serious piece (*Don Garcie de Navarre*, ou *Le Prince Jaloux*), Molière resumed his natural bent; and in *L'Ecole des Maris*, presented one of his best compositions, and at once obliterated all recollection of his failure.

It was acted at Paris with unanimous applause, and again represented at the magnificent entertainment given by the superintendent of finances, Fouquet, to Louis XIV. and his splendid court. Fouquet, at once the most opulent and the most splendid man of his time, had exhausted every species of incense which could be offered to a royal idol. The beautiful Bejart, whom Molière afterwards married, appeared as a Naiad, in a shell shaped like the chariot of a sea-goddess, and delivered an elegant compliment composed by Pelisson. Le Brun painted the decorations of the scene,—Le Nôtre laid out the surrounding architectural ornaments, —La Fontaine wrote verses,—Molière composed and performed parts which none but himself could have invented. All visible to the eye was mirth unbounded, wealth immeasurable, a mighty king received the homage of a devoted subject. But never was there so complete a resemblance of the banquet of Damocles. The sharp glaive, suspended by a single hair, was hanging above the head of the devoted entertainer. Accustomed, like the successful lover of Danaë, to make love in a shower of gold, the financier had found an unexpected resistance in Mademoiselle La Vallière, a beautiful young person, attached to the train of Madame, the

King's sister-in-law. Provoked at his want of success, the superintendent watched so closely every motion of the lady, that he discovered he had the King for his rival. Fouquet, at this moment, was not without hopes of attaining the unbounded power possessed by the lately deceased prime minister, the Cardinal Mazarin. Yet though he nourished this distinguished ambition, his views as a courtier and statesman could not make him suppress his resentment, and, with extreme imprudence, he let La Vallière know that he was acquainted with the secret of her attachment. Indignant at the freedom of the communication, La Vallière lost no time in informing her royal lover of the discovery. It was at the period of the magnificent fête at Vaux, that the King's resentment and jealousy were roused to the highest pitch, by his seeing a portrait of Mademoiselle La Vallière int he cabinet of the ambitious financier. He would have had him arrested and sent to prison on the spot, had not the queen-mother deterred him by the simple yet expressive words—"What! in the middle of an entertainment which he gives to you?" The punishment was only delayed till it could be less scandalous. The disgrace of the superintendent followed close on his magnificent entertainment.

Besides *L'Ecole des Maris*, Molière contributed to the celebrated entertainment at Vaux a dramatic representation, called *Les Fâcheux*, consisting of a series of detached scenes which were only designed to be acted during the intervals of a ballet, to fill the stage while the dancers were changing their dresses and characters for a new exhibition. In these scenes, a lover, who has an assignation with his mistress, is represented as successively interrupted by various importunate persons (in modern tongue *bores*), who come to intrude on him their company and their follies. But out of such slender materials, what a lecture upon follies of character and manners has Molière contrived to read us!

Even the jealous fury which animated Louis did not prevent his entering into the humour of "Les Fâcheux," and pointing out to Molière another folly, which might augment the list of the tormenting intruders. This existed in the person of Monsieur de Soyecourt, Grand Veneur, or Great Huntsman to the King, wildly and exclusively attached to the pleasures of the chase. The royal hint was not neglected, but it became necessary, in order to acquire the terms

of the chase to be placed in the mouth of the new character, that Molière should apply to Monsieur de Soyecourt himself, who with unsuspicious good-nature, furnished the comedian with an ample vocabulary of the phrases destined to render himself ridiculous. The scene which Molière composed on this occasion exhibits a strong contrast betwixt French and English manners. Dorante is a courtier devoted to the chase, who insists upon telling Eraste a long story about a late hunting-match in which he was engaged; and which was broken off by a country gentleman, who, against all the rules of *venerie*, shot the stag dead with a pistol. In England, such a country gentleman as Squire Western would have understood hunting better than all the nobles of the court of St. James.

M. Taschereau observes that in one scene of this little unconnected string of scenes, which nevertheless has more wit and nature in it than most regular comedies, the poet has shown his philosophy as well as his power of comedy. It is where he recognises the efforts of the King to put a stop to the Gothic and barbarous custom of duelling. "It is an example which ought to teach poets how to employ the influence they possess over the human heart." We subscribe to the opinion, yet must add that it was also a high and exquisite touch of flattery, although very properly introduced in the only drama which Molière inscribed to Louis XIV.

L'Ecole des Femmes was Molière's next work of importance. It is a comedy of the highest order. An old gentleman, who had been an intriguer in his youth, and knew (as he flattered himself) all the wiles of womankind, endeavours to avoid what he considers as the usual fate of husbands, by marrying his ward, a beautiful girl, simple almost to silliness, but to whom nature has given as much of old mother Eve's talent for persuasion and imposition as enables her to baffle all the schemes of her aged admirer, and unite herself to a young gallant more suited to her age. "The Country Wife" of Wycherley is an imitation of this piece, with the demerit on the part of the English author of having rendered licentious a plot which in Molière's hands is only gay.

Although this piece was well received and highly applauded, it was at the same time severely criticised by those who had swallowed without digesting the ridicule which the author had heaped on the Hôtel de Rambouillet in the *Pré-*

cieuses Ridicules, and on the various conceits and follies of the court in *Les Fâcheux*. Such critics having shown themselves too wise to express the pain which they felt on their own account, now set up as guardians of the purity of the national morals, and of the national language. A *naïve* expression used by Agnes was represented as depraving the one; a low and somewhat vulgar phrase was insisted upon as calculated to ruin the other. This affected severity in morals and grammar did not impose on the public, who were quite aware of the motive of critics who endeavoured to ground such formidable charges on foundations so limited. The celebrated Boileau drew his pen in defence of his friend, in whose most burlesque expression there truly lurked a learned and useful moral. "Let the envious exclaim against thee," he said, "because thy scenes are agreeable to all the vulgar; if thou wert less acquainted with the art of pleasing, thou wouldst be enabled to please even thy censors." Molière himself wrote a defence of *L'Ecole des Femmes*, "in which," says M. Taschereau, "he had the good fortune to escape the most dangerous fault of an author writing upon his own compositions, and to exhibit wit, where some people would only have shown vanity and self-conceit."

The wrath of these paltry and prejudiced critics proceeded beyond all the bounds of literary censure. The Duc de la Feuillade, supposed to be the original of a ridiculous man of quality introduced by Molière in his *Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes*, was guilty of an action equally unbecoming and brutal, considering that the aristocratic laws of the French society of the day left him at liberty to put a personal affront on the manager of a theatre, whatever his genius or respectability, without being exposed to render him a personal account. He met Molière in one of the galleries of the Tuileries, and assuming the appearance of one who wished to embrace and salute him—then no uncommon compliment—he seized rudely upon the poet's head with both his hands, and rubbing his face violently against the buttons of his own dress, repeated again and again the words *tarte à la crême—tarte à la crême*—being one of the phrases in *L'Ecole des Femmes*, on which the critics had fastened as unpolite and barbarous. Greatly to the honour of Louis XIV, he censured with severity the courtier who,

under the pretence of zeal for the elegance and purity of the French language, had taken the unmanly opportunity to insult a man of genius within the precincts of his master's palace.

L'In-promptu de Versailles was another fugitive piece, in which Molière, under the eyes of the sovereign, repelled the invidious criticism with which he had been assailed. Boursault, a man of talent and genius, had joined the cry against Molière, under the belief that he had himself been aimed at in the character of Lysidas, the poet, in the interlude. But Boursault prudently retired from the combat.

La Princesse d'Elide, executed upon a signal of the royal sceptre, was composed in haste to garnish a splendid fête of Louis, at Versailles, on the 9th of October, 1664, under the title of "The Pleasures of the Enchanted Island." As the scene belongs to the gorgeous and romantic drama, it afforded little scope to Molière's comic powers, though he has thrown in what the old English stage would have called the humours of Moron, a court jester. There may have been, however, allusions which are now lost, but which had poignancy at the time, since the entertainment was received with great applause. This production is like the interlude of *Les Fâcheux*, rather a series of detached scenes, connected by one single interest, which they neither advance nor retard, than a comedy bearing a regular plot.

His next production, of the same year, was a one act comedy, entitled *Le Mariage Forcé*. Sganarelle, a humourist of fifty-three or four, having a mind to marry a fashionable young woman, but feeling some instinctive doubts and scruples, consults several of his friends upon this momentous question; and the inimitable wit of Molière sustains so bald and simple a plot, without permitting the reader to feel a sensation that the piece is wire-drawn, or devoid of interest. The ridicule falls in a great measure on the sophists of the Sorbonne, whose attachment to the categories of Aristotle rendered them so obstinately opposed to every species of philosophical inquiry which transcended the limited sphere of the Stagyrite. The Aristotelian philosophers of the Sorbonne are treated with as little mercy as those of the ancient schools by the satirist Lucian, to whose works Molière seems to have been no stranger. Receiving no satisfactory counsel, and not much pleased with the proceed-

ings of his bride elect, Sganarelle at last determines to give up his engagement, but is cudgelled into compliance by the brother of his intended; and so ends an entertainment which in the hands of any other would have been meagre enough, but as treated by Molière is full of humour and gaiety.

The concluding incident was taken from an adventure of the celebrated Comte De Grammont, renowned for his wit and gallantry, which made much noise at the time. While residing at the court of Charles II, Grammont had paid his assiduous addresses to the beautiful Miss Hamilton, sister of his future historian, Count Anthony Hamilton; but as fickle as brilliant, the Comte de Grammont, being permitted by Louis XIV to return to Paris, set off for Dover without taking leave of his mistress. Two brethren of the deserted Ariadne pursued and overtook the fugitive Theseus. "Have you not forgotten something in London, Comte?" was the question of the Hamiltons. "In faith, I have," replied the count (more prudent than Sganarelle, and not waiting till things came to extremities,) "to marry your sister." And he returned and redeemed his pledge accordingly with a better grace, at least, than most other persons would have manifested in similar circumstances.

In the evening of the same day which saw *Le Mariage Forcé*, came out, as a part of the royal fête, the three first acts, or rough sketch, of the celebrated satire, entitled *Tartuffe*, one of the most powerful of Molière's compositions. It was applauded; but from the clamour excited against the poet and the performance as an attack on religion, instead of its impious and insidious adversary hypocrisy, the representation was for the time interdicted; a fortunate circumstance, perhaps—since, in consequence, the drama underwent a sedulous revision, given by Molière to few of his performances.

Le Festin de Pierre—the Feast of the Statue—well known to the modern stage under the name of Don Juan—was the next vehicle of Molière's satire. The story, borrowed from the Spanish, is well known. In giving the sentiments of the libertine Spaniard, the author of *Tartuffe* could not suppress his resentment against the party, by whose interest with the king that piece had been excluded from the stage, or at least its representation suspended.

"The profession of a hypocrite," says Don Juan, "has marvellous advantages. The imposture is always respected; and although it may be detected, must never be condemned. Other human vices are exposed to censure, and may be attacked boldly. Hypocrisy alone enjoys a privilege, which stops the mouth of the satirist, and enjoys the repose of sovereign impunity." This expression, with some other passages in the piece (the general tenor of which is certainly not very edifying), called down violent clamours upon the imprudent author. Some critics went so far, as to invoke the spiritual censure, and the doom of the civil magistrate, on Molière, as the Atheist of his own *Festin de Pierre*. He was, however, on this as on other occasions, supported by the decided favour of the King, who then allowed Molière's company to take the title of *Comediens du Roi*, and bestowed on them a pension of seven thousand livres, thereby showing how little he was influenced by the clamours of the poet's enemies, though attacking his mind on a weak point.

In the month of September, 1665, the King having commanded such an entertainment to be prepared, the sketch or impromptu called *L'Amour Médecin*, was, in the course of five days, composed, got up, as the players call it, and represented. In this sketch, slight as it was, Molière contrived to declare war against a new and influential body of enemies. This was the medical faculty, which he had slightly attacked in the *Festin de Pierre*. Every science has its weak points, and is rather benefited than injured by the satire which, putting pedantry and quackery out of fashion, opens the way to an enlightened pursuit of knowledge. The medical faculty at Paris, in the middle of the seventeenth century, was at a very low ebb. Almost every physician was attached to some particular form of treatment, which he exercised on his patients without distinction, and probably killed in as many instances as it effected a cure. Their exterior, designed, doubtless, to inspire respect by its peculiar garb and formal manner, was in itself matter of ridicule. They ambled on mules through the city of Paris, attired in an antique and grotesque dress, the jest of its laughter-loving people, and the dread of those who were unfortunate enough to be their patients. The consultations of these sages were conducted in a barbarous Latinity, or if they condescended to use the popular language, they dis-

figured it with an unnecessary profusion of technical terms, or rendered it unintelligible by a prodigal tissue of scholastic formalities of expression. M. Taschereau quotes the verses of a contemporary:

> " Affecter un air pedantesque,
> Cracher du Grec et du Latin,
> Longue perruque, habit grotesque,
> De la fourrure et du satin:
> Tout cela reuni fait presque
> Ce qu'on appelle un médecin."

The rules taught to the faculty were calculated to cherish every ancient error and exclude every modern improvement, for they were sworn never to seek out discoveries in the science which they practised, or to depart from the aphorisms of Hippocrates. Daring empirics were found amongst them, who adventured upon the administration of chemical receipts, of which they could not even conjecture the effect, and there were individuals believed capable, if gained by a sufficient bribe, of accelerating the death of the patients whom they came to cure. The medical science was, in short, enveloped in ignorance, and to encourage those who followed the profession in the attainment of real knowledge, it was necessary to expose the pedantry and insufficiency of these formal and empty pretenders to a science of which they knew nothing. To rescue the noble power of healing, which has in our days been followed by so many men of minds as vigorous and powerful as their hearts were benevolent, from the hands of ignorance and empiricism, was a task worthy the satire of Molière, who, with Le Sage for his colleague, went far in accomplishing it.

The venerable dulness and pedantic ignorance of the faculty was incensed at the ridicule cast upon it in *L'Amour Médecin*, especially, as four of its most distinguished members were introduced under Greek names, invented by Boileau for his friend's use. The consultation held by these sages, which respects everything save the case of the patient—the ceremonious difficulty with which they are at first brought to deliver their opinions—the vivacity and fury with which each finally defends his own, menacing the instant death of the patient, if any other treatment be observed, seemed all to the public highly comical, and led many reflecting men to think Lisette was not far wrong, in con-

tending that a patient should not be said to die of a fever or a consumption, but of four doctors and two apothecaries. The farce enlarged the sphere of Molière's enemies, but as the poet suffered none of the faculty to prescribe for him, their resentment was of the less consequence.

The *Misanthrope*, accounted by the French critics the most correct of Molière's compositions, was the next vehicle of his satire against the follies of the age. Except for the usual fault of his gratuitously adopted coarseness, it is admirably imitated in the "Plain Dealer," of Wycherley. Alceste is an upright and manly character, but rude, and impatien even of the ordinary civilities of life and the harmless hypocrisies of complaisance, by which the ugliness of human nature is in some degree disguised. He quarrels with his friend Philinte for receiving the bow of a man he despises; and with his mistress for enjoying a little harmless ridicule of her friend, when her back is turned. He tells a conceited poet, that he prefers the sense and simplicity of an old ballad to the false wit of a modern sonnet—he proves his judgment to be just,—and receives a challenge from the poet in reward of his criticism. Such a character, placed in opposition to the false and fantastic affectations of the day, afforded a wide scope for the satire of Molière. The situation somewhat resembles that of Eraste in *Les Fâcheux*. But the latter personage is only interrupted by fools and impostors during a walk in the Tuileries, where he expects to meet his mistress. The distress of Alceste lies deeper. He is thwarted by pretenders and coxcombs in the paths of life itself, and his peculiar temper renders him impatient of being pressed and shouldered by them; so that, like an irritable man in a crowd, he resents those inconveniences, to which men of equanimity submit, not as a matter of choice, indeed, but as a point of necessity. The greater correctness of this piece may be owing to the lapse of nine months (an unusual term of repose for the muse of Molière) betwixt the appearance of *L'Amour Médecin*, and that of the *Misanthrope*. Yet this chef-d'œuvre was at first coldly received by the Parisian audience; and to render it more attractive, Molière was compelled to attach to its representation the lively farce of *Le Médecin malgré lui*. In a short time the merit of the *Misanthrope* became acknowledged by the public, and even

many of those critics who had hitherto been hostile united in its praise.

Yet scandal was not silent; for Molière was loudly censured, as having in the person of Alceste, ridiculed the Duke de Montausier, a man of honour and virtue, but of blunt uncourteous manners. The duke, informed that he had been brought on the stage by Molière, threatened vengeance; but being persuaded to see the play, he sought out the author instantly, embraced him repeatedly, and assured him, that if he had really thought of him when composing the *Misanthrope*, he regarded it as an honour which he could never forget.

The lively farce of *Le Médecin malgré lui*, was translated by Fielding, under the title of the "Mock Doctor." The story is taken from an old fabliau, which in its turn has probably been derived from an Eastern tale. In the original tale, the Mock Doctor having been cudgelled into a leech of deep skill, is commanded by the king of the country, on pain of perishing under the bastinado, to cure at once all the sick of the capital, whom the well-meaning sovereign has assembled for the purpose in an immense hospital. The "Médecin malgré lui," extricates himself with dexterity. He assembles his patients in a great hall, in one end of which is lighted a mighty fire.

> "My friends," says the physician, "I can, it is true, cure all your complaints, but the principal ingredient in my panacea, is the ashes of a man who has been burned alive! As this is indispensable to the composition of the medicine, I have no doubt that the patient amongst you who feels himself most deplorably indisposed, will willingly agree to be sacrificed as the victim, by means of whose death the rest are to be cured. You, sir," addressing a gouty patient, "have much the appearance of being the greatest invalid present."—"Who, I, sir?" replied Gout, "appearances are deceitful, I was never better in my life than at this moment."—"If well in health what business have you among the sick? Get out with you! You," to a paralytic patient, "have, I presume, no objection to become the scape-goat."—"Every objection p-p-possible," stuttered Palsy, and was turned out to hobble after Gout. The doctor gets rid of all his patients in the same manner, without any loss of reputation; for as they leave the hospital they are interrogated severally by the king, to whom, under apprehension of being sent back to be calcined, they all report themselves perfectly cured."

We cannot help thinking, that if Molière had been acquainted with this singular conclusion of the story, he would have, under some form or other, introduced it into his whim-

sical and entertaining little drama. The author himself treated the piece as a trifle, for which he is affectionately reproved by the author of the following verses:—

> " Molière, dit-on, ne l'appelle
> Qu'une petite bagatelle:
> Mais cette bagatelle est d'un esprit si fin,
> Que, s'il faut que je vous le die,
> L'estime qu'on en fait est une maladie,
> Qui fait que, dans Paris, tout court au *Médecin*."

But not even the praises paid to the *Misanthrope*, though a piece of a mood much higher than *Le Médecin malgré lui*, satisfied Molière. " *Vous verrez bien autre chose*," said he to Boileau, when the latter congratulated him on the success of the chef-d'œuvre which we have just named. He anticipated the success of the most remarkable of his performances, the celebrated *Tartuffe*, in which he has unmasked and branded vice, as in his lighter pieces he has chastised folly. This piece had been acted before Louis, before his queen, and his mother, and at the palace of the great Prince of Condé; but the scruples infused into the King long induced him to hesitate ere he removed the interdict which prohibited its representation. Neither were these scruples yet removed. Permission was, indeed, given to represent the piece, but under the title of the "Impostor," and calling the principal person, Panulphe, for it seems the name of Tartuffe was peculiarly offensive. The King, having left Paris for the army, the president of the parliament of Paris prohibited any further representation of the obnoxious piece, thus disguised, although licensed by his majesty. Louis did not resent this interference, and two compositions of Molière were interposed betwixt the date of the suspension which we have noticed, and the final permission to bring *Tartuffe* on the stage. These were—*Mélicerte*, a species of heroic pastoral, in which Molière certainly did not excel,—and *Le Sicilien, ou L'Amour Peintre,* a few lively scenes linked together, so as to form a pleasing introduction to several of those dances in costume, or ballets, as they were called, in which Louis himself often assumed a character.

At length, in August, 1667, *Le Tartuffe*, so long suppressed, appeared on the stage, and in the depth and power of its composition left all authors of comedy far behind. The art ..h which the "Impostor" is made to develop his real cha-

racter, without any of the usual soliloquies or addresses to a confidant, for the benefit of the audience, has been always admired as inimitable. The heart of a man who had least desired, and could worst bear close investigation, is discovered and ascertained in all its bearings, gradually, yet certainly, as navigators trace the lines and bearings of an unknown coast. The persons amongst whom this illustrious hypocrite performs the principal character, are traced with equal distinctness. The silly old mother, obstinate from age as well as bigotry; the modest and sensible Cléante; his brother-in-law, Orgon, prepared to be a dupe by prepossession and self-opinion; Damis, impetuous and unreflecting; Mariane, gentle and patient, with the hasty and petulant sallies of Dorine, who ridicules the family she serves with affection; are all faithfully drawn, and contribute their own share on the effect of the piece, while they assist in bringing on the catastrophe. In this catastrophe, however, there is something rather inartificial. It is brought about too much by a *tour de force*, too entirely by the "de par le roi," to deserve the praise bestowed on the rest of the piece. It resembles, in short, too nearly the receipt for making the "Beggars' Opera" end happily, by sending some one to call out a reprieve. But as it manifested at the same time the power of the prince, and afforded opportunity for panegyric on his acuteness in detecting and punishing fraud, Molière, it is certain, might have his own good reasons for unwinding and disentangling the plot by means of an *exempt* or king's messenger.

Besides the honourable tribute paid to the sovereign in the close of the *Tartuffe*, a diverting part of the colloquy in the first act was borrowed from an expression of Louis himself. It chanced that upon the eve of a fast, the king being hungry, sat down to a repast, and invited Perefixe, bishop of Rhodez, to bear him company. The prelate declined with affectation, and with an obstinacy of which the king desired to know the motive. After the bishop had left the apartment, some one gave Louis a particular account of his reverence's dinner; which consisted of so many dishes, and was so well done justice to, that his majesty could have no apprehension of his suffering from famine. At the name of each new dish, the king exclaimed, in a varied inflection of voice, "*Oh, le pauvre homme!*" the very expression

which Orgon uses to express his sympathy with Tartuffe. This anecdote associated the prince, in a certain degree, with the success of the play, and may have inclined him at last to the favourable estimate which he formed of *Tartuffe*.

But our readers may request, after all, to know our sentiments on the objection of profanity, which, though unquestionably it was advanced against Molière by men actuated by personal and invidious motives, was also supported by the authority of Bossuet and Bourdaloue.

"As true and false doctrine," says the latter preacher, "have I know not how many actions in common betwixt them, and the exterior of the one can hardly be discriminated from the other, it is not only an easy, but almost a necessary consequence, that the raillery which attacks one should affect the other, and that the features imputed to the one should disfigure the other. Such has been the actual consequence when profane wits have undertaken to censure hypocrisy, and thereby caused unjust suspicions to be entertained of real piety, by malignant interpretations put upon that which is false. This is what they have attempted in exposing to the laughter of a public theatre, an imaginary hypocrite, and turning, in his person, the most holy things into ridicule, representing him as blaming the scandals of the world in an extravagant manner, and as affecting a scrupulous conscience on indifferent matters, while he scrupled not, secretly, to meditate the most atrocious crimes, assuming a rueful penitentiary visage, which only served to cover the most sensual indulgences, and affixing to him, as their caprice suggests, an exterior of austere piety, as a cover for the basest and most mercenary purposes."

Such is the charge brought by a wise, eloquent, and pious man, in his sermon on the seventh Sunday after Easter. But wisdom, eloquence, and piety, are all liable to error, and differing essentially from Bourdaloue in the opinion which he has expressed, we have deemed it only justice to state the case in his own forcible words before we venture to express our humble sentiments.

We may remark, in the first place, that were the preacher's arguments to be carried to extremity, it would follow as a result, that no vice could be blamed, lest a censure should arise on its corresponding virtue. In that mode of reasoning, a satire upon avarice would be objectionable as a censure upon economy, and the blame applicable to profusion would be proscribed as discrediting generosity. For every virtue, brilliant in itself, is followed by a vice, attached to it as shadow is to substance, bearing in its milder aspect the appearance of the virtue carried to excess, and seeming as

inseparable from it as Bourdaloue declares hypocrisy to be from true religion. But are we, therefore, to refrain from censuring the vicious excess, because we render due honour to the virtue practised in its just mean? We do not, however, insist on this general argument, because we willingly concede that it is less lawful and even more dangerous to treat lightly the language and observances of religion, than those which only regard moral conduct and social life.

We agree, therefore, with Father Bourdaloue, that the rash application of satire or ridicule, as the single test of truth, from which there lies no appeal, may lead to the worst consequences where religion is in question. To hold up to ridicule the scruples of a conscience really tender and fearful of offence, even if these scruples are stretched, in our estimation, to the verge of absurdity, is, we think, likely to be attended with all the scandal to true religion which the learned preacher apprehends. But grant the existence of such criminals as Tartuffe (and, alas! who dare deny that there have existed, and perhaps are yet to be found such snakes in the bosom of Christian society), we search in vain in Scripture, or in the practice of the best friends of religion in all ages, for any warrant to spare them. If we look to the Holy Scripture, our best and safest guide, no crime is denounced more frequently, or described as more odious to the Author of our religion, than that of the hypocrites who made a gain of godliness, and possessed themselves by means of long prayers of the goods of orphans. We find them repeatedly mentioned, and with a deepness of denunciation on their practices which seems to authorize their being held up to detestation by every means which can be taken to expose moral criminals. If the state of society be such, that characters of a cast so dangerous,

> "Safe from the bar, the pulpit, and the throne,
> Are touched and shamed by ridicule alone,"

where shall we find the means of assailing them unless by the influence of satire?

If ridicule as well as reason had not been employed, and that with an unsparing hand, the whole Christian world would at this day have groaned under the oppressions and usurpations of the Church of Rome; or if Louis XVI had fully apprehended the satire of Molière, he might have saved

that great blot on his name, the persecution of his Protestant subjects, and the breach of public faith, in revoking the Edict of Nantes. Ridicule is, we allow, a hazardous weapon, to be used with caution; yet when employed with a good faith and honest purpose, it is the most formidable and effectual which can be directed against a crime equally odious in the sight of God and dangerous to human society. It is, we think, in the allegorical romance of Spenser, that a champion is introduced bending with awe and reluctance his lance against an opponent covered by the red cross shield. But when that sign is found to disguise an impostor and a felon, the true knight does not permit him for an instant to enjoy its protection. There is much less danger of religion being discredited by the discovery and exposure of devoted and self-seeking hypocrisy, than in permitting that vice to lurk like a concealed and consuming canker in the bosom of society, undetected and uncauterized. To assert that the practice of exterior observances is to preserve the hypocrite from exposure, because it may occasion a scrupulous inquisition into the conduct of the really concientious, is saying that we ought to receive a false coinage because it is an imitation of that which is true, or that the profession of religion ought to serve, like the churches in Popish countries, as an asylum for all that is vicious and criminal in society.

If, indeed, hypocrisy is to be sacred from ridicule, it is not easy to see to what tribunal that odious vice is to be delivered for trial and censure. The scandal which Père Bourdaloue apprehends to real religion, must be incurred by every species of inquisition that shall be made into the reality of religious pretexts; and yet without some such inquisition the tares cannot be severed from the wheat—the forged and worthless imitation distinguished from the precious and inimitable reality. The same evil would arise from punishing the crimes of Tartuffe in a court of justice, as from exposing them upon the stage. But, surely, although such exposure may lead men to try more severely the pretensions of such as make peculiar professions of devotion, the separation of the pure gold from the dross must in the end lead to the first being held in higher estimation, and to the worthlessness of the second being exposed to deserved contempt.

We have hitherto considered the case of an incorrigible

hypocrite, as of one who is punished not with a view to his correction, but to his detection and the prevention of the mischief he may work in society. But this is only half of the real question. Spiritual pride, a sin, and a great one, often creeps insensibly into bosoms which are most formed to nourish devotional sentiments. The self-supposed elect of the Deity is too apt (so easily are our best inclinations turned to corruption and perversion) to look down on the race of worldly men, and, in his delusion, to return thanks, with the Pharisee, that he is not like the contrite Publican. A portrait like that of Tartuffe may arrest such a man in his course, by showing him that the fairest professions and the strictest observances may be consistent with the foulest purposes; and that though we may strictly discharge our religious duties, we are not to arrogate to ourselves merits towards heaven, or entertain hopes which can only be grounded on merits far different from our own. Such a picture may also call to reflection the bold and ambitious impostor; who, from the desire of acquiring influence over his fellowmen, is tempted to use his religious character as the means of effecting his purpose. As the career of such a character often begins and proceeds to a certain length in the sincere feeling of devotion, it may be prevented from ending in a course of hypocrisy equally dangerous to the individual himself and to society, by the public exposure of the contents of one of those sepulchres, whitened on the outside, which are a charnel-house within.

We do not desire to travel out of the record, or to lay down any general rule in what cases satire ought, or ought not, to be employed in reprehension of hypocrisy. Undoubtedly there may be instances to which Bourdaloue's arguments are applicable, and where it may be better that a criminal person should be punished, or expelled from society, without public exposure. But the case of Tartuffe is that of a vilely wicked man, rendering the profession of religion hateful, by abusing it for the worst purposes; and if such characters occurred, as there is little reason to doubt, in the time and court of Louis XIV, we can see no reason against their being gibbeted in effigy. The poet himself is at pains to show that he draws the true line of distinction betwixt the hypocrite and the truly religious man. When the duped Orgon, astonished at the discovery of Tartuffe's

villany, expresses himself doubtful of the existence of real worth, Cléante replies to him with his usual sense and moderation.

> "Quoi! parce qu'un fripon vous dupe avec audace
> Sous le pompeux éclat d'un austère grimace,
> Vous voulez que partout on soit fait comme lui,
> Et qu'aucun vrai dévot ne se trouve aujourd'hui?
> Laissez aux libertins ces sottes consequences:
> Démêlez la vertu d'avec ses apparences,
> Ne hasardez jamais vôtre estime trop tôt,
> Et soyez pour cela dans le milieu qu'il faut.
> Gardez vous, s'il se peut, d'honorer l'imposture:
> Mais au vrai zèle aussi n'allez pas faire injure;
> Et s'il vous faut tomber dans une extrémité,
> Pêchez plutôt encor de cet autre côté."—*Act V. Scene I.*

After the victorious reception of *Tartuffe*, and before the clamour and controversy to which it gave occasion were nearly ended, Molière presented the stage with the wild and lively comedy of *Amphitryon.* We must own that a piece founded on such a subject does not appear to us to have been wisely calculated to efface the reproaches cast upon the author of *Tartuffe* as a corrupter of national morals, and that a satire on some decided vice, fashionable at the time, would have much better supported his defence against the devotees, whether true or false, than a drama, which, though drawing its origin from Pagan times, must always remain censurable. But the subject had been admitted on every stage in Europe, although, according to Riccoboni, it should not be received on any theatre, where morals are respected.

The truth may, perhaps, be, that Molière, weary for the moment of contention, was willing to compose a play, entertaining from its subject, and affording room for jests, which neither men of fashion, doctors, princesses nor bigots, could regard as personal. He might remember what the great Condé said to Louis XIV, when the king asked him how the auditors, so sensitive about *Tartuffe*, listened, without indignation, to the profanities and indecencies of a coarse farce called *Scaramouche Hermite.* "Because," replied Condé, "it only violates decency and religion, without attacking priests and bigots." Be that as it may, Amphitryon was handled with infinite humour, and with as much decency as the story permitted, and censure was drowned in laughter.

Molière was not so fortunate in his next piece, though

equally well received, and no less deserving of it. *George Dandin*, a wealthy citizen, who has had the imprudence to marry a sprig of quality, daughter of an old jackass of nobility called Monsieur De Sotenville, and his no less noble spouse Madame de la Prudoterie, is exposed at once to the coquetry of a light-headed wife, who despises his birth and understanding, and to the rigorous sway of her parents; who, called upon to interfere with their authority, place their daughter on the right, and the unhappy roturier, their son-in-law, in the wrong, on every appeal which is made to them. Angelica is represented as thoughtless, not criminal, and appearances, at least, are thus saved. Nevertheless, there was more than one Sotenville about court, and Dandin in the city, who felt the ridicule sting home, and complained, as Rousseau did afterwards, that in seeking food for his satiric vein, Molière was not unwilling to pervert the order of society, and to sow dissension in the bosom of families. The public again laughed at the sufferers, and exculpated the poet, or became, by their applause, his accomplices in the pretended crime.

George Dandin was acted 18th July, 1668. On the 3d September, in the same year, the moral comedy of *L'Avare* was presented to the public by the fertile muse of our author. The general conception of the piece, as well as many of the individual scenes, are taken from Plautus, but adapted to French society, with a degree of felicity belonging to Molière alone. The poor (and most people think themselves so with relation to their expenses) are usually somewhat envious of the rich, and very willing to enjoy a laugh at their cost; especially if the latter stand convicted of avarice, or saving money, not for the sake of what it can procure, but for the purpose of amassing and hoarding it. No vice meets with less sympathy than avarice, for the good reason that all think that they could employ, to advantage, what the miser seems to possess only after the manner of Æsop's dog in the manger, witholding it from others, yet denying to himself the enjoyments which it might command. The vice also, when it gains possession of an individual, shows so mean, inconsequential, and unreaonable, that we cannot wonder at its being a favourite subject for satirical poetry. The highest compliment paid to the truth of Molière's picture was by an actual miser, who was so much delighted with the repre-

sentation, that he did not grudge the money which his admission had cost, because the piece, as he argued, contained such excellent lessons of economy. It is remarkable that M. Taschereau, while he mentions this play as an immortal page in the history of French manners, seems to think that it records a character which has now ceased to exist in Paris. Elwes has been long in his grave; but we believe that Harpagons could yet be found on this side of the Channel. *L'Avare* was less favourably received than usual; the reason assigned is its being written in prose;—but posterity did Molière ample justice:—it was transferred to the British stage, of which it still retains possession, by the celebrated Fielding.

Monsieur De Pourceaugnac, acted in autumn, 1669, "is," says Voltaire, "a farce; but in all Molière's farces are found scenes worthy of the highest class of comedy." It is mixed, undoubtedly, with much buffoonery of a coarse and low kind; but this was necessary to attract large popular audiences. "I am the manager of a theatre as well as an author," said Molière. "I must make some money, as well as correct and instruct, and I am necessarily sometimes induced to consult the profit and interest of my company, at the expense of my own fame as an author." To a confession so frank and manly no critic can venture to reply; the only wonder is, how little, comparatively speaking, there is of meanness or sacrifice to public taste, how much of real wit and comedy, in compositions which claim no higher name than farces.

The province of Limoges has been esteemed the Thebes of France, and its natives, as if born in a grosser air, are popularly supposed peculiarly dull, and liable to imposition. A Limosin gentleman, named Monsieur De Pourceaugnac (almost all the names of that country terminate in *ac*), comes to Paris to marry Julie, the heroine; the authority of her father having destined her hand to him. But Julie has a lover, and this lover has the art to play off so many tricks and mystifications upon the provincial suitor, that he finally relinquishes his suit in despair. The piece being a *commedie-ballet*, the comic scenes are intermingled with pageants resembling the ancient masque, which were ingeniously contrived so as to blend with the interest of the piece. What is delivered as real comic dialogue is so excellent, that Diderot has well said, the critic would be much mistaken

who should think there were men more capable of writing *Monsieur De Pourceaugnac* than of composing the *Misanthrope*. This piece was brought on the English stage under the title of the *Brave Irishman*. The object of the tricks and jests of the scene is, in that little piece, an honest Hibernian, whom the author has gifted with a perfect ignorance of the town, and a competent quantity of confusion of ideas, but, at the same time, with so much of the native gallantry of his country, that, instead of encountering the fate of Monsieur De Pourceaugnac, he breaks through all the toils which have been spread for him, and carries off the lady in spite of his intriguing rival.

Omitting *Les Amans Magnifiques*, called by Molière a minor comedy, but which may be rather considered as a piece of frame-work for the introduction of scenic pageantry, and which is only distinguished by some satirical shafts, directed against the now obsolete folly of judicial astrology, we hasten to notice a masterpiece of Molière's art in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. This piece was written to please the court and gentry, at the expense of the *nouveaux riches*, who, rendered wealthy by the sudden acquisition of immense fortune, become desirous to emulate such as have been educated in the front ranks of society, in those accomplishments, whether mental or personal, which cannot be gracefully acquired after the early part of life is past. A grave, elderly gentleman learning to dance is proverbially ridiculous; but the same absurdity attaches to every one, who, suddenly elevated from his own sphere, becomes desirous of imitating in the most minute particulars, those who are denizens of that to which he is raised. It is scarcely necessary to notice, that the ridicule directed against such characters as Monsieur Jourdain properly applies, not to their having made their fortunes, if by honest means, but to their being ambitious to distinguish themselves by qualities inconsistent with their age, habits of thinking, and previous manners. Johnson, before the time of Molière, had described, in the character of Sogliardo, a character something like Monsieur Jourdain, to whom the Heralds' College had assigned for crest a headless boar. "And rampant too—troth I commend the Herald's wit," observes one of the personages. "He has decyphered him with a swine without a head, without brain, wit, or anything, indeed, ramping to gen-

tility." But the comic power of Molière has dwelt upon and illustrated the character, which Johnson only indicated by a few rough outlines; and there are a few scenes, even in this admirable author's performances, more laughable than those of Jourdain's scenes with his various teachers, illustrated by the raillery of Nicole, who sees and exposes so naturally the folly of her master.

The subjects of raillery most generally piquant to the high-born and courtly, are those directed against such intruders as Monsieur Jourdain, whom wealth emboldens to thrust upon them an awkward pretension to equality. Yet the court of France did not receive *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* in a favourable manner, when first presented at Chambord, on 14th October, 1670. Louis XIV, contrary to his wont, sate silent during the entertainment, and did not, as had been his custom hitherto, address a single word of encouragement to the author. *Regis ad exemplar*—the lords of the court looked cold on Molière, and the tongues of all his enemies were unchained. Some called shame upon him, for having represented Dorante, a man of quality, united in a scheme for duping Monsieur Jourdain, and partaking his spoils. Others, with more judgment, exclaimed against the extravagant interlude, in which the *bourgeois gentilhomme* is persuaded that the Grand Seignor has made him a Mamamouchi, a knight of an imaginary order, and goes through the ceremony of a mock installation. Those very critics who ask how Molière had hoped to pass such gibberish upon them as was sung on this occasion, had listened with tranquillity, nay, with affected delight, to entertainments of the same kind, in which Louis himself had appeared as a performer. The friends of Molière made no very judicious defence. They endeavoured to represent the plot of the interlude as probable, and quoted the instance of the Abbé St. Martin, who had been duped into a belief that he had received honours from the King of Siam. But Molière's apology rested on the very nature of the comedie-ballet, which admits of every species of incident, provided it produces good music and merry dances.

Several days elapsed between the first and second representation, during which Molière sustained all the anxiety of a discountenanced author; but, after the piece had been acted for the second time, Louis at once did justice to the poet

and to his own judgment. The piece, he said, was excellent; and he had only suspended his opinion till he should be assured that he was speaking on mature reflection, and not under the seductive impression of excellent acting.

Of course the tone of the courtiers changed; the chorus of "Ha la ba, Ba la chou," became wit and sense, and Dorante was only a man of quality who inflicted condign punishment on an insolvent roturier, and abated his fever of conceit by assisting to drain his pocket. A certain duke, in particular, who had been loud in declaring against the dancing Turks and their unintelligible mummery, now exclaimed in well-painted rapture, "Molière is inimitable. He has reached a point of perfection to which none of the ancients ever attained."

Les Fourberies de Scapin, an imitation of the Phormio of Terence, was Molière's next performance. It was written, not for the amusement of the court, but for the diversion of the city of Paris, and possesses no other interest than what can be produced by whimsical interest, the tricks of an ingenious valet,

"From top to toe the Geta now in vogue,"

upon an ill-tempered and avaricious father, in behalf of a giddy and extravagant son. There is no severe strain of morality in such a plot; but it is absurd to suppose, that either parents will become dishonest, or sons disobedient, because they see Scapin and Leandre cheat old Argante. It would be as reasonable to suppose, that a peasant would go home and beat his wife, because Punch, in the puppet-show, cudgels Joan. This comedy is one of adventure and intrigue, with little pretension to delineation of character. But Molière's exquisite skill in dialogue could not be suppressed or concealed. We doubt if, with his utmost efforts, he could have been absolutely dull, without the assistance of a pastoral subject and heroic measure. The phrase, *Que diable alla-t-il faire dans cette galère?* will live as long as the French language.

Psyche may be omitted as a subject totally unfitted for Molière's genius; we are even tempted to say, it could not be the work of the author of the *Misanthrope*, with its brilliant associates in fame. *Non omnia*—the highest genius has its natural bounds. *La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas*, which next

appears, turns entirely upon the oddities, absurdities, and affectations of the provincial noblesse, who had, at that time, manners and habits of thinking extremely ridiculous in the eyes of the more polished society of the court. Molière must have been completely acquainted with these ludicrous points in the character of this class of society, as he had resided in so many different parts of France, at the head of his wandering troop. Accordingly he has presented us with the rural Dowager, who is deeply incensed that a man of quality at court, whose family is not, perhaps, above two hundred years old, should dare to compare his gentility with that of her deceased husband, who had lived all his life in the country, kept a pack of hounds, and signed himself *Count*, in every bill, bond or acquittance. The clownishness of the poor lady's servants is humorously contrasted with her vain attempts to make them keep up the appearances she thinks suitable to her rank. It is, perhaps, the piece of Molière's in which foreigners feel the comic point least forcibly; but it was followed by one, the interest of which is vivid and unimpaired by the course of time.

This is *Les Femmes Savantes*, acted on 11th March, 1672; it was directed against a new female foible which had sprung up in the world of fashion, after the explosion of that of the Hôtel de Rambouillet. Always ambitious of exclusive distinction, as they dared no longer render themselves conspicuous by the jargon of romance, they adopted the honours of science, and aspired to the dignity of learned ladies. Molière, "the Contemplator," as his friends called him, did not suffer this new species of pedantry to elude his vigilance. In fact it was of the same *genus*, though of a different species from that which he had formerly assailed successfully; for modish affectation possesses as many heads as the fabled hydra, of which

"One still bourgeons where another falls;"

and the satirist, on his part, deserved the praise due to a moral Hercules.

Out of a fashion or humour, which to an ordinary man would have but afforded a few scenes, Molière has found sufficient interest to fill up five acts of one of his best regular comedies. The Abbé Cotin—a personage who, affecting to unite in himself the rather inconsistent characters of a writer of poems of gallantry and a powerful and excellent preacher,

had obtained in the satires of Boileau a painful immortality —was also distinguished in *Les Femmes Savantes* as one of the leading beaux-esprit of the day, a poet *à la mode*, who, with equal truth and modesty, had the assurance to claim for himself the title of the Father of French Epigram. His dramatic name was originally Tricotin, which, as too plainly pointing out the individual, was softened into Trissotin. The following are the colours with which Molière has painted the unfortunate academician, for such Cotin had the honour to be.

> ——————"Monsieur Trissotin
> M'inspire au fond de l'âme un dominant chagrin.
> Je ne puis consentir, pour gagner ses suffrages
> A me déshonorer en prisant ses ouvrages;
> C'est par eux qu'à mes yeux il a d'abord paru,
> Et je le connoissois avant que l'avoir vu.
> Je vis, dans le fatras des écrits qu'il nous donne,
> Ce qu'étale en tous lieux sa pedante porsonne,
> La constante hauteur de sa présomption,
> Cette intrépidité de bonne opinion,
> Cet indolent état de confiance extrême,
> Qui le rend en tout temps si content de soi-même,
> Qui fait qu'à son mérite incessamment il rit,
> Qu'il se sait si bon gré de tout ce qu'il écrit,
> Et qu'il ne voudroit pas changer sa renommée
> Contre tous les honneurs d'un général d'armée."

The coxcombry of Trissotin is most pleasantly contrasted with the severe, grave, and more formal folly and presumption of Vadius, a pedant of heavier pretensions, founded upon his scholarship. The effect produced by the introduction of this brace of pretenders to the heroines, upon whom their supposed merits produce the same effect as the fashionable brilliancy of Mascarille and Jodelet in *Les Précieuses Ridicules*, is extremely comical; nor is the behaviour of the two originals to each other less so, since, after dispensing the necessary degree of mutual flattery, a mistake of the pedant in criticising a madrigal of which Trissotin was the author, sets them together by the ears, and produces a scene of quarrelling as ridiculous as that of mutual flattery which preceded it.

The character of the learned ladies, who exclaim in rapture at sight of a man who understands Greek, dismiss their female domestic because she does not understand the delicacies of French grammar, and wellnigh cashier a lac-

quey, not for dropping a chair, but because he does not know the consequence of any derangement from the centre of gravity, is well contrasted with the foible of the Father of the Family, a man not devoid of good sense, and extremely fond of vindicating his title to be obeyed, so long as his wife is absent, but submitting, on all occasions, when he is called upon to maintain his rights by courageous perseverance against the will of his helpmate. This play has been always considered one of Molière's most powerful, as it is one of his most regular comedies.

The last of this great author's labours was at once directed against the faculty of medicine, and aimed at its most vulnerable point—namely, the influence used by some unworthy members of the profession to avail themselves of the nervous fears and unfounded apprehensions of hypochondriac patients. Instead of treating imaginary maladies as a mental disease, requiring moral medicine, there have been found in all times medical men, capable of listening to the rehearsal of these brain-sick whims as if they were real complaints, prescribing for them as such, and receiving the wages of imposition, instead of the honourable reward of science. On the other hand, it must be admitted, that the faculty has always possessed members of a spirit to condemn and regret such despicable practices. There cannot be juster objects of satire than such empircis, nor is there a foible more deserving of ridicule than the selfish timidity of the hypochondriac, who, ungrateful for the store of good health with which nature has endowed him, assumes the habitual precautions of an infirm patient.

Molière has added much to the humour of the piece by assigning to the *Malade Imaginaire* a strain of frugality along with his love of medicine, which leads him to take every mode that may diminish the expense of his supposed indisposition. The expenses of a sick-bed are often talked of, but it is only the imaginary valetudinarian who thinks of carrying economy into that department; the real patient has other things to think of. Argan, therefore, is discovered taxing his apothecary's bill, at once delighting his ear with the flowery language of the Pharmacopœia, and gratifying his frugal disposition by clipping off some items and reducing others, and arriving at the double conclusion, first, that if his apothecary does not become more reasonable, he cannot

afford to be a sick man any longer; and secondly, that as he has swallowed fewer drugs by one-third this month than he had done the last, it was no wonder that he was not so well. The inference "*Je le dirai à Monsieur Purgon, afin qu'il mette ordre à cela,*" is irresistibly comic.

It is scarcely an overstrained circumstance that an original, at once so fond of medicine and so chary of his money, should think of marrying his daughter to a young cub of a medical student, who is to be dubbed doctor in a few days. He is directed to this choice, both by the honour in which he holds the faculty, and the desire to possess the necessary medical advice within his own family, which he is obliged to purchase at so dear a rate. A second wife, the stepmother of the destined bride, soothes her husband in this as well as his other humours. The match is opposed, and finally with success, by the inclinations of Angélique, the daughter, and the intrigues of her lover, Cléante, seconded by Toinette, a *fille de chambre* of the same brisk lively humour which the author loved to draw. Thomas Diafoirus, the young candidate for the privilege of killing or curing, is an admirable portrait of its particular class. Pendantry is never more ridiculous than when associated with youth, upon which it sits so awkwardly.

There is a stage anecdote about the representation of the characters, worth the remark of more than one manager. An actress of his troop, of considerable pretensions, had married an inferior comedian named Beauveau, who had been at one time a candle-snuffer in the theatre. The parts of Toinette and Thomas Diafoirus were intrusted to this couple. Molière made so many critical objections to the lady's performance that she lost all patience. "You say all this to me," said she, "and not a word to my husband."—"Heaven forbid I should attempt to instruct him," said Molière, "nature has given Monsieur Beauveau an instinctive comprehension of the part, which I should spoil in attempting to mend it."

Argan is at last persuaded that the surest and cheapest way of securing himself against the variety of maladies by which he is beset, will be to become a doctor in his own proper person. He modestly represents his want of preliminary study, and of the necessary knowledge even of the Latin language; but he is assured that by merely putting on the

robe and cap of a physician, he will find himself endowed with all the knowledge necessary for exercising the profession. "What," says the patient, "will merely putting on the habit enable me to speak scholarly upon diseases?" "Assuredly," reply his advisers, "under such a garb gibberish becomes learning, and folly wisdom." This leads to the interlude which concludes the piece, being the mock ceremonial of receiving a physician into the Esculapian college, couched in macaronic Latinity, which was afterwards introduced by Foote in the farce where Dr. Last makes a figure so distinguished. Another of these interludes we may barely mention as containing one of those flashes of humour of which Molière was so lavish, that they are to be found in his most trifling productions. Such certainly is a dance in which Polichinelle (Punch, namely) is pursued in the dark by the officers of justice (archers), and puts them to flight by making a sound resembling the report of a pistol. But though this is even childishly farcical, what can be more truly comic than the exclamation of the *archers* when they rally on the unfortunate jester:—

"Faquin, maraud, pendard, impudent, téméraire,
Insolent, effronté, coquin, filou, voleur,
Vous osez nous faire peur!"

"As the *Malade Imaginaire* was the last character in which Molière appeared, it is here necessary to say a few words upon his capacity as an actor. He bore, according to one contemporary, and with justice, the first rank among the performers of his line. He was a comedian from top to toe. He seemed to possess more voices than one, besides which every limb had its expression; a step in advance or retreat, a wink, a smile, a nod, expressed more in his action, than the greatest talker could explain in words in the course of an hour. He was, says another contemporary, neither corpulent nor otherwise, rather above the middle size, with a noble carriage and well-formed limbs; he walked with dignity, had a very serious aspect, the nose and mouth rather large, with full lips, a dark complexion, the eyebrows black and strongly marked, and a command of countenance which rendered his physiognomy formed to express comedy. A less friendly pen (that of the author of *L'In-promptu de l'Hôtel de Condé*) has caricatured Molière as coming on the stage with his head thrown habitually back, his nose turned

up into the air, his hands on his sides with an affectation of negligence, and (what would seem in England a gross affectation, but which was tolerated in Paris as an expression of the *superbia quæsita meritis*) his peruke always environed by a crown of laurels. But the only real defect in his performance arose from a habitual *hoquet*, or slight hiccup, which he had acquired by attempting to render himself master of an extreme volubility of enunciation, but which his exquisite art contrived on almost all occasions successfully to disguise.

Thus externally fitted for his art, there can be no doubt that he, who possessed so much comedy in his conceptions of character, must have had equal judgment and taste in the theatrical expression, and that only the poet himself could fully convey what he alone could have composed. He performed the principal character in almost all his own pieces, and adhered to the stage even when many motives concurred to authorize his retirement.

We do not reckon it any great temptation to Molière, that the Academy should have opened its arms to receive him, under condition that he would abandon the profession of an actor; but the reason which he assigned for declining to purchase the honour at the rate proposed, is worthy of being mentioned. "What can induce you to hesitate?" said Boileau, charged by the Academicians with the negotiation. "A point of honour," replied Molière. "Now," answered his friend, "what honour can lie in blacking your face with mustaches, and assuming the burlesque disguise of a buffoon, in order to be cudgelled on a public stage?" "The point of honour," answered Molière, "consists in my not deserting more than a hundred persons, whom my personal exertions are necessary to support." The Academy afterwards did honour to themselves and justice to Molière by placing his bust in their hall, with this tasteful and repentant inscription—

"Nothing is wanting to the glory of Molière. Molière was wanting to ours!"

That Molière alleged no false excuse for continuing on the stage, was evident, when, in the latter years of his life, his decaying health prompted him strongly to resign. He had been at all times of a delicate constitution, and liable to pulmonary affections, which were rather palliated than

cured by submission, during long intervals, to a milk diet, and by frequenting the country, for which purpose he had a villa at Auteuil, near Paris. The malady grew more alarming from time to time, and the exertions of voice and person required by his profession tended to increase its severity. On the 17th of February, 1673, he became worse than usual; Baron, an actor of the highest rank, and of his own training, joined with the rest of the company in remonstrating against their patron going on in the character of Argan. Molière answered them in the same spirit which dictated his reply to Boileau: "There are fifty people," he said, "who must want their daily bread, if the spectacle is put off. I should reproach myself with their distress, if I suffered them to sustain such a loss, having the power to prevent it."

He acted accordingly that evening, but suffered most cruelly in the task of disguising his sense of internal pain. A singular contrast it was betwixt the state of the actor and the fictitious character which he represented; Molière was disguising his real, and, as it proved, his dying agonies, in order to give utterance and interest to the feigned or fancied complaints of *Le Malade Imaginaire*, and repressing the voice of mortal sufferance to affect that of an imaginary hypochondriac. At length, on arriving at the concluding interlude, in which, assenting to the oath administered to him as the candidate for medical honours, in the mock ceremonial, by which he engages to administer the remedies prescribed by the ancients, whether right or wrong, and never to use any other than those approved by the college—

"Maladus dût-il crevare,
Et mori de suo malo,"

as Molière, in the character of Argan, replied *Juro*, the faculty had a full and fatal revenge. The wheel was broken at the cistern—he had fallen into a convulsive fit. The entertainment was hurried to a conclusion, and Molière was carried home. His cough returned with violence, and he was found to have burst a blood-vessel. A priest was sent for, and two scrupulous ecclesiastics of Saint Eustace's parish distinguished themselves by refusing to administer the last consolations to a player and the author of Tartuffe. A third, of better principles, came too late,—Molière was insensible, and choked by the quantity of blood which he could

not discharge. Two poor Sisters of Charity, who had often experienced his bounty, supported him as he expired.

Bigotry persecuted to the grave the lifeless relics of the man of genius. Harlai, archbishop of Paris, who himself died of the consequences of a course of continued debauchery, thought it necessary to show himself as intolerantly strict in form as he was licentious in practice. He forbade the burial of a comedian's remains. Madame Molière went to throw herself at the feet of Louis XIV; but, with impolitic temerity, her petition stated, that if her deceased husband had been criminal in composing and acting dramatic pieces, his majesty, at whose command and for whose amusement he had done so, must be criminal also. This argument, though in itself unanswerable, was too bluntly stated to be favourably received; Louis dismissed the suppliant with the indifferent answer, that the matter depended on the archbishop of Paris. The king, however, sent private orders to Harlai, to revoke the interdict against the decent burial of the man, whose talents, during his lifetime, his majesty had delighted to honour. The funeral took place accordingly, but, like that of Ophelia, "with maimed rites." The curate of Saint Eustace had directions not to give his attendance, and the corpse was transported from his place of residence, and taken to the burial-ground, without being, as usual, presented at the parish-church. This was not all. A large assemblage of the lower class seemed to threaten an interruption of the funeral ceremony. But their fanaticism was not proof against a thousand francs which the widow of Molière dispersed among them from the windows—thus purchasing for the remains of her husband an uninterrupted passage to their last abode.

In these latter proceedings all readers will recognize the bigotry of the time. If, in the peculiar circumstances in which Molière died, while personating a ridiculous character, and affecting an imaginary disease, there are precisians, even in the present day, who may be disposed to regard this catastrophe as a special manifestation of the divine displeasure, we would remind them, first, of the passage in the Gospel of St. Mark, strongly discountenancing such deductions; secondly, we would observe, that the benevolent motive expressed by Molière for acting upon that occasion could not be other than sincere, since bodily malady, of the

severe nature under which he laboured, must have silenced personal vanity, or any less powerful reason than the one alleged; lastly, we may add, that if it be, in any circumstances, lawful to correct vice and folly by ridicule, and by an appeal to the feelings of the ludicrous which make part of our nature, the exposure of the selfish folly of the Malade Imaginaire, and of the ignorance as well as covetousness of those who assume the robe of knowledge without either knowledge or probity, must be a lawful and a useful employment.

We have now finished with Molière's public life, which was, in many respects, one of the most triumphant, and even apparently the most happy, that a man of genius could well propose to himself. From the time he returned to Paris in 1658, till 1673 when he died, fifteen years of continued triumph had attended his literary career; and, wonderful to tell, notwitstanding the proverbial fickleness of courts and of popular audiences, Molière never for a moment appears to have lost ground in their high opinion. His most insipid pieces, such as *Mélicerte* and the like, incurred no disapprobation, they served their purpose, and were so applauded; while those in which his own vein of wit and humour was displayed, were, in every instance, welcomed with shouts of applause at their first representation, or with universal approbation after a short interval of doubt, which must have rendered it still more flattering; like favours won from a mistress who would have refused them if she could. These were years, indeed, not of peace,—for Molière was surrounded by enemies,—but years of victorious war with enemies whom he despised, defied, and conquered. Nor were they years of ease and indolence, but a far more happy period of successful exertion. His reputation was unbounded, and his praise the theme of every tongue, from that of the Grand Monarque himself, to the meanest of his subjects.

Other men of genius have been victims to poverty and difficulties. But of these Molière knew nothing. His income, arising from his profits as manager, actor, and author, was extremely considerable, and, together with his pension, amounted to a sum amply sufficient for every purpose, whether of necessity or elegance. He was, in fact, an opulent man. This good fortune was well bestowed, for he was indefatigable in acts of charity. He sought out objects for

his liberality amongst sufferers of a more modest description, and was lavish of his alms, less justifiably perhaps, to the poor whom he met in the streets. It is well remembered how, on one of these occasions, having given a piece of money to a beggar as he ascended his carriage, he was surprised to see the man come hallooing and panting after him, to tell him he had made a mistake, in giving him a piece of gold in place of some less valuable coin. "Keep the money, my friend, and accept this other piece," said Molière, "*Ou la vertu va-t-elle se nicher?*" The action, as M. Taschereau says truly, shows Molière's benevolence, and the exclamation, in finding an expression so happy for such just wonder, marks his genius.

The private circle of Molière embraced the most distinguished men of the age. La Fontaine, Boileau, the joyous Chapelle, Racine, and other names of distinction in that Augustan age of French literature, formed the society in which he commonly enjoyed his hours of leisure, and in which literature, taste, and conviviality, were happily blended. Many of the nobility had taste enough to waive the difference of rank and to choose Molière for a companion. "Come to me at any hour you please," said the great Prince de Condé to our author, "you have but to announce your name by a valet-de-chambre, your visit can never be ill-timed."

When aristocratic pride, or more frequently private malice and wounded self-conceit, assuming the pretext of difference of rank, endeavored to put an affront upon Molière, he usually received instant indemnification from some nobleman of better taste. Thus when the other valets-de-chambre of the royal household showed an unwillingness to assist Molière in the discharge of his office, Monsieur de Bellocq, a man of genius as well as rank, rebuked them by saying aloud to the object of their paltry spite—"Permit *me* to assist you in making the king's bed, Monsieur de Molière —I shall esteem myself honoured in having you for a companion."

Louis XIV, as we have already observed, was the constant and firm supporter of Molière. When assailed by a horrible calumny, which we will presently notice, the king showed his total disbelief by becoming godfather to one of his children. In fact, to his own great honour, he spared

no opportunity of showing favour to a man whose genius he was fortunately able to appreciate. The following is a remarkable instance, occurring in the memoirs of Madame Campan.

All the world has heard of the hearty appetite of the Grand Monarque. The liberal means which he took to appease his hunger at meal times not appearing uniformly sufficient to parry its attacks, the king introduced a general custom, that there should be a cold fowl, or some such trifle, kept in constant readiness *en cas de nuit*—in case that his majesty should awake hungry. The king had been informed that the officers of his household had refused to admit Molière to the table provided for them, under pretence of the inequality of his condition. He took an opportunity to correct this folly. "Molière," said he, "I am told you make bad cheer here, and I myself feel something of an appetite. Let them serve up my *en cas de nuit*." He then caused Molière to sit down, cut up the fowl, and helping his valet-de-chambre, proceeded to breakfast along with him. It was at the king's levee, so that the noblest about the court saw the society in which it pleased his majesty to eat his meals; and it may be well believed there was no objection in future to the introduction of Molière to the table of service as it was termed.

Yet Molière had his cares and vexations; and the doom of man, born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards, was not reversed for this distinguished author. The plague and vexation arising from quarrels amongst his players, led him to exclaim, in *L'In-promptu de Versailles*,—"What a troublesome task to manage a company of players." To a young man, also, who wished to embrace the profession of an actor, and really had some talents for it, he painted his own art in the most degrading colours; described its followers as compelled to procure the countenance of the great and powerful by the most disagreeable condescensions, and conjured him to follow out the law, for which his father had destined him, and to renounce all thoughts of the stage. There is room to believe that Molière's temper was so impatient, quick, and irritable, as to make him unusually sensible of the plagues and disappointments incidental to the situation of a manager. He was sensitively alive to the mispronunciation of his own verses; and the anecdote which M. Taschereau

gives us as to his extreme agony on this subject, induces us to give credit to what is told of his impatience at any occasional want of punctuality, or accidental derangement of the business of the scene.

But Molière's greatest source of unhappiness arose from his marriage; and upon this subject, the license of his younger years became the means of subjecting him to the most cruel calumnies in his more advanced life.

During the time that Molière was travelling about in the provinces, he formed a connection with an actress of his company, named Madelaine Bejart. This lady had been previously a favourite of the Count de Modene, by whom, in 1638, she had born a daughter, named Françoise, who is supposed to have died soon afterwards. After the amour of Madelaine Bejart and Molière had terminated, our author, in 1661, married another Bejart, whose Christian name was Armande, and who, according to M. Taschereau, was the sister of his mistress Madelaine. In this connection there is something disgusting, and which the laws of some countries even regard as criminal. But a much more foul accusation was framed upon it. One Montfleuri, the favourite performer of a troop of comedians called of "l'Hôtel de Bourgogne," who were the rivals of that of Molière, extracted out of the above circumstance a most horrible and unnatural accusation, which he had the audacity to put into the form of a petition to his majesty. According to this atrocious libel, Armande Bejart was not the sister of Molière's former mistress Madelaine, but her daughter, and the fruits of her communication with Molière himself; thus confusing her with Françoise, daughter of the Count de Modene, the fact of whose birth seemed to give some credit to the horrible assertion.

Such is the account, given by M. Taschereau, of the real family of Molière's wife. According to another hypothesis, detailed in three letters published as a supplement to the last edition of Molière's works, Armande Bejart was not the sister, but actually the daughter of Madelaine Bejart and of the Count de Modene. Under this supposition, Molière married the child of his former mistress. The subject is disgusting, and the evidence on either side very imperfect. Undoubtedly it underwent some examination at the time; for the king refused all credit to the odious imputation of

Montfleuri, and, as we elsewhere hinted, showed his total incredulity on the subject, by condescending, along with the Duchess of Orleans, to stand godfather to Molière's first child—the best refutation, certainly, which could be given to the calumny.

But this marriage was in every respect imprudent and inauspicious, and laid the foundation of his principal misfortunes. His wife was gay, beautiful, and coquettish in the extreme, yet he was not able to forbear loving her with an attachment which was neither deserved nor returned. She disgraced him repeatedly by her intrigues during his lifetime, and her scandalous adventures after his death were dishonourable to his memory. The honest men whom his satire had ridiculed on account of domestic distresses of the same nature, had no doubt some feeling of internal satisfaction, when they found that the author of the *Cocu Imaginaire* shared the same apprehensions with his hero, without having the slightest reason to doubt, in his own instance, of their being founded in reality.

Leaving the consideration of his private life, checkered as it was by favourable and painful circumstances, we willingly take some general view of the character of Molière as an author, in which we feel it our duty to vindicate for him the very highest place of any who has distinguished himself in this department of literature. His natural disposition, his personal habits, his vivacity as a Frenchman, the depth of his knowledge of human nature, his command of a language eminent above all others for the power of expressing ludicrous images and ideas, raise him to the highest point of eminence amongst the authors of his own country and class, and assure him an easy superiority over those of every other country.

Our countrymen will perhaps ask, if we have forgotten the initimable comic powers of our own Shakspeare. The sense of humour displayed by that extraordinary man is perhaps as remarkable as his powers of searching the human bosom for other and deeper purposes. But if Johnson has rightly defined comedy to be a "dramatic representation of the lighter faults of mankind, with a view to make folly and vice ridiculous," it would be difficult to show that Shakspeare has dedicated to such purposes more than occasional and scattered scenes, dispersed through his numerous dramas.

The *Merry Wives of Windsor* is perhaps the piece most resembling a regular comedy, yet the poetry with which it abounds is of a tone, which soars, in many respects beyond its sphere. In most of his other compositions, his comic humour is rather an ingredient of the drama, than the point to which it is emphatically and specially directed. The scenes of Falstaff are but introduced to relieve and garnish the historical chronicle which he desired to bring on the stage. In the characters of Falconbridge and Hotspur, their peculiar humour gilds the stern features of high and lofty chivalry in the *Tempest*, the comic touches shine upon and soften the extravagance of beautiful poetry and romantic fiction. These plays may be something higher and better, but they are not comedies dedicated to expose the vices and follies of mankind, though containing in them much that tends to that purpose. It must also be remembered, that the manners in Shakspeare (so far as his comedy depends on them) are so antiquated, that but for the deep and universal admiration with which England regards her immortal bard, and the pious care with which his works have been explained and commented upon, the follies arising out of the fashions of his time would be entirely obsolete. We enjoy such characters as Don Armado, and even Malvolio, as we would do the pictures of Vandyke in a gallery; not that they resemble in their exterior anything we have ever seen or could have imagined, until the excellence of the painter presented them before us, and made us own that they must have been drawn from originals, now forgotten.

The scenes of Molière, however, are painted from subjects with which our own times are acquainted; they represent follies of a former date indeed, but which have their resemblances in the present day. Some old-fashioned habits being allowed for, the personages of his drama resemble the present generation as much as our grandmother's portraits, but for hoop petticoats and commodes, resemble their descendants of the present generation. Our physicians no longer wear robes of office, or ride upon mules, but we cannot flatter ourselves that the march of intellect, as the cant phrase goes, has exploded either the *Malade Imaginaire* or the race of grave deceivers who fattened on his folly. If, again, we look at Molière's object in all the numerous pieces which his fertile genius produced, we perceive a constant, sustained,

and determined warfare against vice and folly,—sustained by means of wit and satire, without any assistance derived either from sublimity or pathos. It signified little to Molière what was the mere form which his drama assumed; whether regular comedy or comédie-ballet, whether his art worked in its regular sphere, or was pressed by fashion into the service of mummery and pantomime, its excellence was the same—if but one phrase was uttered, that phrase was comic. Instead of sinking down to the farcical subjects which he adopted, whether by command of the king, or to sacrifice to the popular taste, Molière elevated these subjects by his treatment of them. His pen, like the hand of Midas, turned all it touched to gold; or rather, his mode of treating the most ordinary subject gave it a value such as the sculptor or engraver can confer upon clay, rock, old copper, or even cherry-stones.

It is not a little praise to this great author, that he derived none of his powers of amusement from the coarse and mean sources to which the British dramatic poets had such liberal recourse. This might, and probably did, flow in part from the good taste of the poet himself, but it was also much owing to that of Louis XIV. Whatever the private conduct of that prince, of which enough may be learned from the scandalous chronicle of the times, he knew too well *son métier de Roi*, and what was due to his dignity in public to make common jest with his subjects at anything offensive to good morals or decorum. Charles II, on the other hand,—

"A merry monarch, scandalous and poor,"—

had been too long emancipated by his exile from all regal ceremonial, to lay his sense of humour under any restraints of delicacy. He enjoyed a broad jest, as he would have done an extra bottle of wine, without being careful about the persons who participated with him in either; and hence a personal laxity of conduct, which scandalized the feelings of Evelyn, and a neglect of decency in public entertainments, encouraged by the presence of the sovereign, which called down the indignation of Collier. Some comparatively trifling slips, with which the critics of the period charge Molière, form no exception to the general decorum of his writings.

Looking at their general purpose and tendency, we must be convinced that there is no comic author, of ancient or modern times, who directed his satire against such a variety of vices and follies, which, if he could not altogether extirpate, he failed not at all events to drive out of the shape and form which they had assumed.

The absurdities of *L'Etourdi*, the ridiculous jargon of the *Précieuses*, the silly quarrels of the lovers in the *Dépit Amoureux*, the absurd jealousy of husbands in *L'Ecole des Maris*, the varied fopperies and affectations of men of fashion in *Les Fâcheux*, the picture of hypocrisy in the *Tartuffe*, the exhibition at once of bizarre and untractable virtue, and of the depravity of dissimulation, in the *Misanthrope*, the effects of the dangers of misassorted alliances in *George Dandin*, of the tricks of domestics in *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, of the pedantic affectation of learning in *Les Femmes Savantes*, of the dupes who take physic and the knaves who administer it in the *Maladé Imaginaire*,—all these, with similar aberrations, exposed and exploded by the pen of a single author, showed that Molière possessed, in a degree superior to all other men, the falcon's piercing eye to detect vice under every veil, or folly in every shape, and the talons with which to pounce upon either, as the natural prey of the satirist. No other writer of comedy ever soared through flights so many and so various.

We have said that the comedy of Molière never exhibits any touch of the sublime; and from its not being attempted in those more serious pieces, as *Don Garcie Mélicerte*, where a high strain of poetry might have been struck to advantage, we conceive that Molière did not possess that road to the human bosom. One passage alone strikes us as approaching to a very lofty tone. Don Juan, distinguished solely by the desperation of his courage, enters the tomb of the Commander, and ridicules the fears of his servant when he tells him that the statue has nodded in answer to the invitation delivered to him by his master's command. Don Juan delivers the same invitation in person, and the statue again bends his head. Feeling a touch of the supernatural terror to which his lofty courage refuses to give way, his sole observation is, "*Allons, sortons d'ici.*" A retreat, neither alarmed nor precipitated, is all which he will allow to the terrors of such a prodigy.

In like manner, although we are informed that Molière possessed feelings of sensibility too irritable for his own happiness in private life, his writings indicate no command of the pathetic. His lovers are always gallant and witty, but never tender or ardent. This is the case, not only where the love intrigue is only a means of carrying on the business of the scene but, in *Le Dépit Amoureux*, where the ardour of affection might have gracefully mingled with the *tracasseries* of the lovers' quarrels; and in *Psyché*, in which it is to be supposed the author would have introduced the passionate and pathetic, if he had possessed the power of painting it. Nor do any of his personages, in all the distresses in which the scene places them, ever make a strong impression on the feelings of the audience, who are only amused by the ludicrous situations to which the distresses give rise. The detected villany of Tartuffe affects the feelings indeed strongly, but it is more from the gratification of honest resentment against a detected miscreant, than from any interest we take in the fortunes of the duped Orgon.

Neither did Molière ornament his dramatic pieces with poetical imagery, whether descriptive or moral. His mode of writing excluded the "morning sun, and all about gilding the eastern horizon." He wrote to the understanding, and not to the fancy, and was probably aware, moreover, that such poetical ornaments, however elegant when under the direction of good taste, are apt to glide into the opposite extreme, and to lead to that which Molière regarded as the greatest fault in composition, an affectation of finery approaching to the language of the *Précieuses Ridicules.* Alceste, in *Le Misanthrope*, expresses the opinion of the author on this subject:

> "Ce style figuré, dont on se fait vanité,
> Sort de bon charactère, et de la verité,
> Ce n'est que jeu de mots, qu'affectation pure,
> Et ce n'est point ainsi que parle la nature.
> Le méchant gout du siècle en cela me fait peur,
> Nos pères tout grossiers l'avoient beaucoup meilleur."

In what, therefore, it may be asked, consisted the excellence of this entertaining writer, whose works, as often as we have opened a volume during the composition of this slight article, we have found it impossible to lay out of our hand until we had completed a scene, however little to our

immediate purpose of consulting it? If Molière did not possess, or at least has not exercised the powers of the sublime, the pathetic, or the imaginative in poetry, from whence do his works derive their undisputed and almost universal power of charming? We reply, from their truth and from their simplicity; from the powerful and penetrating view of human nature, which could strip folly and vice of all their disguise, and expose them to laughter and scorn when they most hoped for honour and respect; also, from the extreme *naïveté* as well as force of the expressions which effect the author's purpose. A father consults his friends about the deep melancholy into which his daughter is fallen: one advises to procure for her a handsome piece of plate, beautifully sculptured, as an object which cannot fail to give pleasure to the most disconsolate mind. The celebrated answer, *vous êtes orfèvre Monsieur Josse*, at once unmasks the private views of the selfish adviser, and has afforded a measure by which all men, from Molière's time to our own, may judge of the disinterested character of such friendly counsels. This short, dry, sudden and unexpected humour of Molière, seconded as it always is by the soundest good sense, is one great proof of his knowledge of his art. The tragic may be greatly enlivened by some previous preparation, as the advance of a mighty host, with its ensigns displayed, has, even at a distance, an effect upon the nerves of those whom it is about to assail. But wit is most successful when it bursts from an unexpected ambush, and carries its point by surprise. The best jest will lose its effect on the stage, if so much preparation is employed as leads the spectator to anticipate what is coming, as it will suffer in society if introduced with the preface of "I'll tell you a good thing!" In this species of surprise Molière surpasses every writer of comedy, but the jest at which you laugh springs as naturally out of the subject, as if it had been obvious to your apprehension from the very commencement of the scene. A brief sentence, a word, even an exclamation, is often sufficient to produce the full effect of the ludicrous, as a spark will spring a mine, in the place and time when the explosion is least suspected. The most unexpected means in the hands of this great artist are also the most certain; and you are first made sensible of

what he has aimed at, when you admire his arrow quivering in the centre of the mark.

The depth and force of Molière's common sense is equally remarkable in displaying his own just and sound opinions, as in exposing the false taste and affectation of others. Ariste, Philinte, and the other personages of his drama, to whom (as the ancients did their choruses) he has ascribed the task of moralizing upon the subject of the scene, and expressing the sentiments which must be supposed those of the author himself, have all the firmness, strength, and simplicity, proper to the enunciation of truth and wisdom; and much more of both will be found within the precincts of Molière's works, than in the formal lessons of men of less acute capacity.

Molière himself knew the force and value of his simplicity, although sometimes objected to by fastidious critics as hurrying him into occasional vulgarity. In order that he might not depart from it, he adopted the well-known practice of reading his pieces, while in manuscript, to his housekeeper, La Foret, and observing the effect they produced on so plain, but shrewd and sensible a mind, before bringing them on the stage. The habit of being called into consultations of this kind, had given the good dame such an accurate tact, that it was in vain that Molière tried to pass upon her the composition of another poet for his own. The circumstance proves how well she deserved to sit in the chair of censorship which her master had assigned her. Mons. Taschereau thinks, that the opinion of La Foret was only demanded by Molière upon low and farcical subjects. But though we allow that some parts of his higher comedy might be above her sphere, we easily conceive, that the author might have an interest in knowing exactly how much his housekeeper—at once an exact and favourable specimen of a great majority of his audiences—might be able to comprehend of his higher comedy, and in what particulars it was elevated beyond the line of her understanding. Nor is it unreasonable to conceive, that an author who desired above all other things to be generally understood, should have paused on the passages which La Foret comprehended less perfectly, and omitted or explained what was like to prove *caviare* to the multitude. It would not be perhaps unnatural to suppose, that to the shrewd, frank, acute, and

penetrating character of Molière's housekeeper we owe the original idea of those clever and faithful, but caustic and satirical female domestics, the Toinettes and Nicoles, whom he has produced on the stage with so much effect.

We must now take our leave of M. Taschereau, to whose entertaining work we are obliged for so much instruction or amusement. Some readers may be disappointed, that, after pronouncing Molière the prince of the writers of comedy, we should have limited the talents by which he attained such pre-eminence to the possession of common sense, however sound—of observation, however acute—and of expression, however forcible, true, and simple. It is not, however, by talents of a different class from those enjoyed by the rest of humanity that the ingredients which form great men are constituted; on the contrary, such peculiar tastes and talents only produce singularity. The real source of greatness, in almost every department, is an extraordinary proportion of some distinguishing quality proper to all mankind; and of which, therefore, all mankind, less or more, comprehends the character and the value. A man with four arms would be a monster for romance, or for a show; it is the individual that can best make use of the ordinary conformation of his body who obtains a superiority over his fellow-creatures by strength or agility. In a word, the general qnalities of sound judgment, clear views, and powerful expression of what is distinctly perceived, acquire the same value, as they rise in degree above the general capacity of humanity, with that obtained by diamonds, which in proportion to their weight in carats become almost inestimable, while the smaller sparks of the same precious substance are of ordinary occurrence, and held comparatively in slight esteem.

CHATTERTON.*

[Edinburgh Review, April, 1804.]

The works of Chatterton, whose life and death will be the lasting honour and indelible disgrace of the eighteenth century, are at length, after the lapse of more than thirty years, edited in a collected state. We were at some loss to conceive what could have occasioned the long delay of so interesting a publication; and the explanation has proved rather mortifying. *A priori*, such a work seemed particularly calculated to engage the public attention. To the internal merit of the poems, now at length published, is united all the interest excited by the romantic history and lamentable death of the wonderful author, as well as that which arises from the exercise of critical investigation, and the ardour of literary controversy. Nevertheless the delay may be attended by its own advantages in aiding us to ascertain the real merits of the disputed question. The works of Chatterton, or the poems of Rowley, have survived the controversy which attended their appearance in 1770. Of the assailants and defenders of their originality, many have paid the debt to nature, and others will remember their ardour in the contest as the emotions of an agitating dream.† It may therefore be supposed that the public will coolly and impartially determine the controversy (if it yet remains a controversy) upon the solid grounds of evidence; and it might also have been hoped, that circumstances of additional proof, surpressed or misrepresented while the feelings

* *The Works of* Thomas Chatterton; *containing his Life. By* G. Gregory, D. D., *and Miscellaneous Poems.* 3 vols. 8vo. London, 1803.

† [See at the end of vol. iii., *Life and Works of Chatterton*, a Catalogue *raisonnée* of Twenty-eight Publications relating to the Controversy. 1772–1795.]

of being duped were yet too acute, might now have been recovered. We will endeavour to show how far we have been gratified by the present edition, and in what respects it has fallen short of our expectation.

The preface bears the well-known and respectable name of Mr. Robert Southey; but we are informed that so much of the business has devolved upon Mr. Cottle, that it becomes necessary to use the term editors in the plural. Both poets, and both natives of Bristol, we may suppose that these gentlemen felt a deep and peculiar interest in the task they have undertaken, of rendering a just homage to the genius of their wonderful fellow-citizen, and of contributing to the interest of his surviving relation. The purposes to which the profits of the publication are dedicated, are thus expressed in the preface; and the circumstances, while they do honour to the liberality of the editors and publishers, account for the delay of which we have complained, in a manner deeply disgraceful to the taste and feelings of the public.

"In the winter of 1799, a subscription edition of the works of Chatterton was publicly proposed for his sister's benefit. These works had hitherto been published only for the emolument of strangers, who procured them by gift or purchase from the author himself, or pilfered them from his family. From the interest which these circumstances, and the whole of Chatterton's history had excited, more success was expected than has been found. At the end of two years, the subscription would not have defrayed the costs of publication. An arrangement was then made with Messrs. Longman and Rees, who have published the work at their own expense, and allowed Mrs. Newton a handsome number of copies, with a reversionary interest in any future edition."

The friends and patrons of Chatterton, as well as the former collectors of his poems, have been liberal in their communications to the present editors; and the book accordingly contains many of his productions which have been hitherto inedited. We do not aver that, in general, these additions to his works tend to augment his fame; on the contrary, as some of them have been written almost during infancy, as others are merely unfinished fragments, and as all seem incorrect and hasty productions, we cannot but consider them as far inferior to the poems ascribed to Rowley, and even to those which Chatterton was himself pleased to own during his life. But, in another point of view, these

early and unfinished compositions are very interesting. In Chatterton, above all other poets, we would wish not merely to admire the works upon which he may safely rest his claim to immortal fame, but also to investigate the performances in which his exertions have been less successful; and, by comparing them together, to form, if it be possible, some idea of the strength and weakness of this prodigy of early talent. We therefore approve of publishing such pieces as *Sly Dick* and *Apostate Will*, which display the early satirical propensities of young Chatterton; with the elegies, songs, and burlettas, by which he endeavoured rather to supply his necessities, and postpone the dreadful crisis of his fate, than to indulge his genius, or extend his poetical fame. One of his juvenile productions, now published for the first time, is a hymn for Christmas-day, which, if really written about the age of eleven, bears ample testimony to the premature powers of the author. We extract a verse or two, which, when the harmony and ease of expression are contrasted with the author's boyhood, inexperience, and want of instruction, appear almost miraculous.

"Almighty Framer of the skies,
O let our pure devotion rise
  Like incense in thy sight!
Wrapt in impenetrable shade,
The texture of our souls were made,
  Till thy command gave light.

The Sun of glory gleamed, the ray
Refined the darkness into day,
  And bid the vapours fly:
Impelled by His eternal love,
He left his palaces above,
  To cheer our gloomy sky.

How shall we celebrate the day,
When God appeared in mortal clay,
  The mark of worldly scorn.
When the Archangels' heavenly lays
Attempted the Redeemer's praise,
  And hailed Salvation's morn?

A humble form the Godhead wore,
The pains of poverty he bore,
  To gaudy pomp unknown:
Though in a human walk he trod,
Still was the man Almighty God,
  In glory all his own.

Despised, oppressed, the Godhead bears
The torments of this vale of tears,

Nor bid his vengeance rise:
He saw the creatures he had made
Revile his power, his peace invade,
He saw with mercy's eyes."

Such was the early command of language displayed by a child, who, when a beardless youth, was to gull a whole synod of grizzled deans and antiquaries.

The life of Chatterton, prefixed to these volumes, was written by Dr. Gregory of London, for the *Biographia Britannica*, and, by his permission, has been reprinted upon this occasion. Although it seems to be compiled with great fidelity, and probably contains all the material facts known upon the subject, we cannot suppress our hearty wish, that either of the present editors had himself undertaken the task of Chatterton's biographer. Many observations must have occurred to them while preparing these volumes for the press, which have escaped Dr. Gregory, writing many years ago, and for a more limited purpose. This was the more incumbent upon the editors, because, from persons of poetical taste, so long employed in examining Chatterton's productions, the public must have expected some light upon the Rowleian controversy. Dr. Gregory, unwilling, or unable to form a judgment upon this most important point of the life of the youthful poet, has arranged, with great impartiality, the arguments upon both sides, in battle array against each other, leaving his reader to draw such conclusions as his own taste or judgment may enable him to form. Now, this might be very excusable, in the original circumstances in which Dr. Gregory's life of Chatterton was published; for the *Biographia Britannica* is not a natural field for literary controversy, though often occupied as such. But in publishing a formal edition of the whole works of Chatterton, in which those articles ascribed to Rowley are included, the public had a right to expect from the editors, their full sentiments upon the point of most essential interest to their author's fame, especially as Mr. Cottle, at least, has formed and expressed a decided opinion upon the subject. Besides, without depreciating the labours of Dr. Gregory, who has produced a plain and simple account of Chatterton's life, we must express ourselves disappointed, that we have not, from the hand of a poet like Southey, a memorial of his ill-fated brother bard. Few subjects of composition,

equally affecting or elevating, can ever occur; for when we consider the strange ambiguity of Chatterton's character, his attainments under circumstances incalculably disadvantageous, and his wish to disguise them under the name of another; his high spirit of independence, and the ready versatility with which he stooped to the meanest political or literary drudgery; the amiable and interesting affection, which he displays towards his family, with a certain looseness of morality which approaches to profligacy—we cannot but regret that a subject, uniting so strong an alternation of light and shade, had not been sketched by the hand of a master. We will not suppose that Mr. Southey, or his brother editor, retreated from the task of becoming Chatterton's biographer through mere indolence; for, the liberality of their purpose towards his sister, is a pledge to us, that they would not readily "wax weary in well-doing." We content ourselves with lamenting that any reason should have occurred to deprive us of the satisfaction which we would have reaped in seeing a new life of Chatterton, with a full view of the Rowley controversy, upon which, in many particulars, the book before us, and the detached notes of the editors, throw so much light. One general remark we cannot help deducing from the melancholy picture of the life before us. The inconsistencies of Chatterton's conduct and character may be, in some measure, ascribed to his situation and extreme youth; yet we fear their original source was in that inequality of spirits* with which Providence, as in mockery of the most splendid gifts of genius and fancy, has often conjoined them. This strange disorder of the mind, often confounded by the vulgar with actual insanity, of which perhaps it is a remote shade, is fostered by the workings of an ardent imagination as it is checked and subdued by mathematical or philosophical research. It is reconcilable (as is actual insanity) with the exertion of the greatest

* [Mrs. Newton, sister of Chatterton, says, "he had been gloomy from the time he began to learn, but we remarked he was more cheerful after he began to write poetry." "His spirits were rather uneven, sometimes so gloomy, that for many days together he would say but very little, and that by constraint. At other times exceedingly cheerful." "We heard him frequently say that he found he studied best toward the full of the moon; and would often sit up all night and write by moonlight."—*Letter to Rev. H. Croft.* Works, vol. iii, pp. 461–463.]

address in gaining a particular point, or in imposing upon the rest of mankind. In both cases, the object to be attained is usually, in the eyes of the world, either altogether undesirable, or totally inadequate to the trouble and address expended in attaining it. This disease (for such it is, and of a dreadful complexion) may also, like the extremity of mental derangement, be admitted to palliate the deviations from truth and moral rectitude, which it is peculiarly apt to occasion. Without considering the forgery of Rowley's poems in so heinous a light as if they had been a bill or bond, and pecuniary advantage the object of the fraud, we cannot regard the imposture as of an indifferent or harmless nature. Neither was the end proposed, being apparently the mere internal satisfaction of imposing upon the world, or, at best, the sullen obstinacy of maintaining an assertion which had been hastily made, apparently adequate to the immense labour necessary to sustain the credit of Rowley. But the ardent mind of Chatterton, who had pitched the standard of his honour on this particular ground, urged him to maintain it at the sacrifice of the poetical reputation he might have acquired by renouncing a phantom of his imagination, and at the yet more important dereliction of personal truth and moral rectitude.

The alternate fits of melancholy and bursts of high spirits which Chatterton manifested; the strange paper entitled his *will*, in which, with a mixture of levity, of bitter satire and actual despair, he announces a purpose of self-destruction;* above all, the extravagant hopes which marked his arrival in London, and the suicide which finally closed his short and eventful career,—all announce to us that irregular ambition, and impatience of the natural progress of society, which indicate an inflamed imagination and a precarious judgment.

Before leaving the life of Chatterton, we must intimate, that we are somewhat displeased with the recommendatory

* [" Being sound in body, or it is the fault of my last surgeon; the soundness of my mind, the coroner and jury are to be judges of, desiring them to take notice, that the most perfect masters of human nature in Bristol distinguish me by the title of the Mad Genius, therefore, if I do a mad action, it is conformable to every action of my life, which savoured of insanity," &c. &c. &c. Vol. iii, p. 451.]

and laudatory scraps of verse and prose which, in revival of a good old custom, are tacked to the works of the author. Dr. Vicesimus Knox leads the van with a heavy and dolorous imitation of Sterne (which lumbers along like Mr. Shandy's chaise when it was dragged into Lyons without the wheels), followed in sorrowful procession by the Laureate, by Mrs. Cowley, Mrs. Robinson, Miss Helen Maria Williams, Mr. Herbert Croft, and other persons (as the newspapers have it) of talent and distinction. We confess that we think Chatterton little honoured by their tribute of mawkish and affected sympathy. It is disgusting to hear blue-stocking ladies jingle their rhymes, and pedantic schoolmasters pipe upon their sentimental whistles a dirge over the grave of departed genius. We except from this censure a monody of Mr. Coleridge, which, though very unequal, and carelessly executed, exhibits in many passages the feeling and poetical talent which that gentleman always possesses, and sometimes chooses to display. We also except some verses by Mr. Haley, the subject having raised him on this occasion considerably above the cold, correct mediocrity of his usual tone of poetry.

The poems of Chatterton may be divided into two grand classes—those ascribed to Rowley; for surely, to use Mr. Cottle's expression, it is time to pluck the borrowed plumes from the fictitious monk, and to place them on the brow of the real poet;—and those which the bard of Bristol avowed to be his own composition. Of these classes, the former is incalculably superior to the latter in poetical powers and diction. This is a remarkable circumstance, and forms, we think, the only forcible argument in support of the existence and claims of Rowley. But there is a satisfactory answer, founded upon more than one reason, for the inferiority betwixt the avowed and concealed productions of Chatterton. He produced those antiquated poems which he ascribed to Rowley when a youth of sixteen; and his education had been so limited, that his general acquirements were beneath those of boys of the same age, since he was neither acquainted with French nor Latin. If, therefore, there is other evidence to prove that the poems of Rowley were his own composition, it follows, that the whole powers and energies of his extraordinary talents must have been converted to the acquisition of the obsolete language, and peculiar

style necessary to support this deep laid deception. He could have no time for the study of our modern poets, their rules of verse, or modes of expression, while his whole faculties were intensely employed in the herculean task of creating the person, history, and language of an ancient poet, which, vast as these faculties were, was surely sufficient wholly to engross, though not to overburden them. When, therefore, due time is allowed for a boy of sixteen to have acquired the astonishing skill "in antique lore" necessary to the execution of this great project, it will readily be allowed that he must have come to the composition of modern poetry a mere novice, destitute of all adventitious support, and relying only on the strength of his own genius, which, powerful as it was, had hitherto been used in a different and somewhat inconsistent direction. In the poems of Rowley, therefore, we read the exertions of Chatterton in the line of his own choice, aided by all the information which his researches had enabled him to procure, and stimulated by his favourite ambition of imposing upon the literary world; but, in his modern poems, he is engaged in a style of composition to which he was comparatively a stranger, and to which the bent of his mind and turn of his studies had not naturally inclined him. Although this argument seems to account, in a manner sufficiently satisfactory, for the inequality of those productions in which Chatterton has thrown aside the mask of Rowley, it is not the only one which can be offered. Let it be remembered, that, admitting Chatterton to be engaged in a deception, he had pledged himself to maintain it; he was therefore carefully to avoid whatever might tend to remove the veil which he had spread over it; and such was his firmness of perseverance, that he seems to attest the originality of Rowley, even in the *will* which he wrote before his projected suicide.* Without therefore

* This circumstance is much founded on by the believers. To us it only affords an additional proof of the unconquerable and haughty perseverance of Chatterton's character. We attach no implicit faith to dying declarations; for upon points in which fame is implicated, the voice of the passions is heard even in the hour of death. We disclaim every application of the illustration which can be disrespectful to the memory of Chatterton; but it is well known, that criminals, whose crimes are not of a nature to meet public sympathy, often at their death endeavour, by a denial of guilt most satisfactorily proved to avert the odium attached to

supposing that he had *under-written* his own poems, in order to set off those of Rowley, it is obvious, that the former must have been executed under a degree of embarrassment highly unfavourable to poetical composition. As Rowley, Chatterton had put forth his whole strength, and exerted himself to the utmost, in describing those scenes of antique splendour which captivated his imagination so strongly. But when he wrote in his own character, he was under the necessity of avoiding every idea, subject, or expression, however favourite, which could tend to identify the style of Chatterton with that of Rowley; and surely it is no more to be expected that, thus cramped and trammelled, he should equal his unrestrained efforts, than that a man should exert the same speed with fetters on his limbs, as if they were at liberty.

Let it be further considered, that there exist persons to whom nature has granted the talent of the mimicking, not merely the voice and gesture, but the expression, ideas, and manner of thinking of others, and who, speaking in an assumed character, display a fire and genius which evaporates when they resume their own. In like manner, Chatterton, with all his wonderful powers, appears, from the habit of writing as a fictitious personage, and in a strangely antiquated dialect, to have in some degree formed a character to his supposed Rowley, superior to what he was able to maintain in his own person when his disguise was laid aside. The veil of antiquity, also,—the hard, and often inexplicable phrases, which he felt himself at liberty to use under his assumed character of a poet of the fifteenth century, serve, in a considerable degree, to blind and impose upon the reader, who does not find himself entitled to condemn what he does not understand, and who is inclined, from the eminent beauty of many passages, to extend his gratuitous admiration to those which are less intelligible. But, when writing in modern English, the advantage is lost; and we are often shocked with a bald and prosaic tautology, with bombast, and with

their persons and memory. It may be thought that Chatterton would have better consulted his own fame, by avowing these beautiful poems; but the pride of every one is not sustained by the same nutriment. He probably deprecated the doubtful fame of an ingenious but detected impostor, and preferred the internal consciousness, that, by persisting in the deception he had commenced, future ages might venerate the poems of Chatterton, under patronage of the fictitious Rowley.

coarseness of expression—all the defects, not of Chatterton's natural genius, but of his extreme youth and deficient education; and many instances of which will be found to exist by curious inquirers, even under the seemly and antique *Alban* of the *Deigne Thomas Rowleie, Prieste of St. Johans, Bristowe.*

When the believers in Rowley are driven from this strong ward, we apprehend they can hardly make good their footing in any other. Two or three gentlemen, companions of Chatterton while at school, have ventured to give it as their decided opinion, that, according to their estimation of his talents, he was unable to compose the poems of Rowley. Mr. Cottle treats with well-merited contempt the evidence of these persons, who, from recollection of an opinion formed while schoolboys, conceive the plummet of their understanding adequate to fathom the depth of Chatterton's genius. A list is given of the parchments which have been produced as remnants of Rowley's MSS.; all of which, from the shape and texture, as well as from the handwriting, are very evidently forgeries by the unfortunate young man from whom they were recovered.

Above all, the internal evidence arising from the poems themselves, has always appeared to us to convey decisive marks of modern origin. The smoothness of the verse,—which, in most cases, resembles the most correct modern poetry,—as well as the complicated nature of the stanza, are highly suspicious. It is no doubt true, that, in some compositions of a lyrical nature, the old English poets attained a considerable degree of ease and fluency, chiefly such as were adapted to the music of the minstrels, when the necessity of following the tune, compelled the poet to observe a regularity of rhythm. Such, for example, are the poems of Lawrence Minot. But these poems are flimsy songs, in which the same idea, and often the same words, are repeated and chimed upon, in order to attain the necessary smoothness. Take, for example, a verse of Minot, which, for the sake of the uninitiated, we have stripped of the antique spelling:—

"Sir David the Bruce
  Was at distance,
When Edward the Baliolfe
  Rode with his lance;

The north end of England
  Teached him to dance.
When he was met on the moor,
  With mikell mischaunce,
Sir Philip the valayse
  Might not him advance;
The flowers that fair were
  Ar fallen in France;
The flowers are now fallen,
  That fair were and fell;
A boar with his battaille
  Has don them to dwell."

The ease of these lines is the smoothness of mere ballad, attained by the tenuity of idea, and the tautology of expression. But the smoothness of Rowley is combined with all the graces and refinement of modern poetry. Take two stanzas at hazard, divested of the artificial *patina*, or rust, of antique orthography :—

"The sun was gleaming in the midst of day,
  Dead-still the air, and eke the welkin blue,
When from the sea arose, in drear array,
  A heap of clouds, of sable, sullen hue,
The which full fast unto the woodland drew,
  Hiding at once the sunnes festive face;
And the black tempest swell'd, and gather'd up apace.

— — — — — — —

The gather'd storm is ripe; the big drops fall;
  The sun-burnt meadows smoke, and drink the rain;
The coming *ghastness* doth the castle 'pal;
  And the full flockes are driving o'er the plain.
Dash'd from the clouds the waters fly again,
  The welkin opes, the yellow levin flies,
And the hot fiery steam in the wide flashing dies."

Can any one read this beautiful description of a landscape overshaded by a thunder storm, and doubt for a moment that it is by a modern hand?—yet we have only discarded *hiltring*, *fetyve*, *forswat*, and *smothe*, all other differences betwixt our copy and the text being merely in spelling. Chatterton's answer to the strong objection arising from the smoothness of Rowley's poetry, when stated to him by Horace Walpole, is very remarkable,—"The harmony is not so extraordinary, as Joseph Iscam is altogether as harmonious." Now, as Joseph Iscam is equally a person of dubious existence, this is a curious instance of *placing the elephant upon the tortoise*. It is not our wish to engage farther in the controversy. If any one resists the internal

evidence of the style of Rowley's poems, we make him welcome to the rest of the argument; to his belief that the Saxons imported heraldry, and gave armorial bearings (which were not known till the time of the Crusades); that Mr. Robert Canning in the reign of Edward IV, encouraged drawing, and had private theatricals; that Mr. Burgum, the pewterer of Bristol, derived his descent from Simon de Leyncte Lyze, *alias* Senlez, who married Matilda, daughter of Waltheof, Earl of Northumberland, Northampton, and Huntingdon; that Mr. Stephens of Salisbury drew his ancestry from Od, Earl of Blois and Holderness, who flourished about 1095; and that Chatterton himself represented the Sieur de Chasteautonne, of the house of Rollo, the first Duke of Normandy;—

> Quibus si credideris,
> Expectare poteris
> Arthurum cum Britonibus.

Nothing can be more extraordinary than the delight which Chatterton appears to have felt in executing these numberless and multifarious impositions. His ruling passion was not the vanity of a poet who depends upon the opinion of others for its gratification, but the stoical pride of talent, which felt nourishment in the solitary contemplation of superiority over the dupes who fell into his toils. He has himself described this leading feature of his character in a letter to Mr. Barret.

> "It is my pride, my damned, native, unconquerable pride, that plunges me into distraction. You must know that 19-20ths of my composition is pride. I must either live a slave—a servant—have no will of my own which I may fairly declare as such, OR DIE." —Vol. iii, p. 419.

The art and avidity with which the youthful poet seized every opportunity, "through an excess of ingenuity in a literary sense, *to impose on the credulity of others*," is justly remarked by Mr. Cottle to be "the predominant quality which elucidates his character, and is deserving of minute regard by all who attempt to decide on the Rowleian controversy." We shall extract the instances, which the editor has brought together, forming a curious picture of a most active and powerful mind, imbued with a strange rage for the practice of literary imposture:—

"I. A *new bridge* is just completed over the Avon at Bristol.—

Chatterton sends to the printer a description of the passing over the *old bridge*, for the first time, in the thirteenth century; on which occasion two songs are sung by two saints, of whom nobody ever heard, and in language precisely the same as Rowley's, although he lived two hundered years after the event was said to have taken place.

"II. Mr. Burgum is a man attached to heraldic honours.—Chatterton gives him his pedigree from the time of William the Conqueror, and allies him to some of the most ancient families in the kingdom!

"III. Mr. Burgum is one of the first persons who expresses an opinion of the authenticity and excellence of Rowley's poems. Chatterton, pleased with this first blossom of credulity, and from which he presaged an abundant harvest, with an elated and grateful heart, presents him with the *Romaunt of the Cynghte*, a poem, written by 'John de Bergham,' one of *his own* ancestors, about four hundred and fifty years before; and the more effectually to exclude suspicion, he accompanies it with the same poem, modernized by himself.

"IV. Chatterton wishes to obtain the good opinion of his relation, Mr. Stephens of Salisbury, and, from something, which it is possible his keen observation had remarked in Mr. Stephens, he deems it the most effectual way, by informing him that he is descended from Fitz-Stephen, grandson of the venerable Od, Earl of Blois, and Lord of Holderness, who flourished about the year 1095!

"V. Mr. Catcott is a worthy and religious man; and who, from never intending to deceive, suspects no deception in others.—Chatterton, who is a skilful engineer, adapts the nature of his attack to the strength of the fortress, and gives him an ancient fragment of a sermon on the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, as *wroten* by Thomas Rowley!

"VI. Mr. Barrett is zealous to prove the antiquity of Bristol.—As a demonstrable evidence, Chatterton sends him an escutcheon (on the authority of the same Thomas Rowley) borne by a Saxon of the name of Ailward, who resided in *Bristow* in the year 718!

"VII. Mr. Barrett is also writing a comprehensive history of Bristol, and is solicitous to obtain all possible information concerning it.—Chatterton seizes the opportunity, and presents him, at *different times*, with an account of all the churches and chapels of Bristol, as they appeared three hundred years before, and accompanies it with drawings and descriptions of the castle; the whole of this information being unsupported by either document or tradition, and resting alone on the evidence of 'the gode prieste *Thomas Rowley*,' between whom and *Thomas Chatterton*, prejudice itself must allow, there was a great equality of talent, as well as a great similitude of pursuits. They were both poets, both antiquarians, and both perpetually adverting to heraldry.

"VIII. Public curiosity and general admiration are excited by translations from the Erse of Ossian.—Chatterton, who gave precedence to none in 'catching the manners living as they rise,' publishes a succession of poems from the *Saxon* and *Welch*, indif-

ferent to the inconsistency, or otherwise not aware, that he had professedly translated works in the *same* style, and with the *same* imagery, from the TEUTONIC and CELTIC, two languages of different origin and genius, and whose poetry, of all their writings, has ever been considered as the most dissimilar.

"IX. Mr. Walpole is writing the history of British painters. Chatterton (who, to a confidential friend, had before expressed an opinion that it was *possible* by judicious management, to deceive even this master in antiquities), with full confidence, sends him an account of eminent 'Carvellers' and 'Peyncters,' and informs him of others who once flourished in BRISTOL! but of whom the present inhabitants of Bristol never heard!

"But these are all subordinate deceptions. Chatterton's ambition embraced a larger range, and was circumscribed by no other limit, than, in the person of Rowley, of deceiving the whole world. And, that he succeeded in a great and unaccountable degree, is attested by the voluminous controversies of antiquarians, historians, and poets. The object bespoke the comprehension of his mind; and its partial success is a lasting monument of what perseverance may effect when supported by genius."—P. 509-514.

This curious detail of repeated imposture, regularly executed at the time when circumstances appeared to give an opening for them, may surely suffice to excite the suspicion of the most credulous believer in Rowley. Alike a forger of style, of MSS., and of drawings, nothing escaped the imitation of a youth, born as it were with the rare talents of executing such multiplied deceptions, and with a temper framed to delight in his success, which it may be hoped is still rarer. Of the merit of the Rowley poems, in a critical point of view, it is not here the place, or now the time to speak. They have been long subjected to the public; and in spite of their being written in a dialect which resembles the ancient or modern language of England, hardly more nearly than the vocabulary of George Psalmanazar did that of Formosa, they have been ever esteemed compositions of the highest merit. The drama called *Ella*, many parts of the *Battle of Hastings*, the *Ballad of Charity*, that of *Sir Charles Bawdin* (which somewhat resembles the antique style of minstrel poetry), the *Dirge*, and several of the *Eclogues*, may rank with the labours of our most distinguished poets. Pity it is, that the circumstances and temper of the author combined to shorten a life distinguished by such works of excellence during its limited career.

The poems avowed by Chatterton were, with a few exceptions, satirical or amatory. In the former line, his inclination for severity is more remarkable than his success.

Perhaps he adopted this style of composition, not only in compliance with a natural acerbity of temper aggravated by his dependent situation, but also as most remote from the walk of the moral and heroic Rowley. Satire, however, in a polished age, requires more than mere genius and the force of numbers. General invective, however coarse and vehement, falls heavily to the ground, unless sharpened and guided by that accurate and discriminating knowledge of men and manners which is not often acquired in early youth, or easily obtained in obscure circumstances. The personal reflections which his satires level against those persons in Bristol to whom Chatterton is admitted to have owed the deepest obligations, do little honour to their author. We hardly know whether to laugh or grieve, when he reproaches Catcott, down whose throat he had crammed the improbable tale of Rowley, with gross *credulity*, because he was a believer in revelation! The amatory poems are pretty much what might have been expected from his declared intention "of making acquaintance with a girl in the neighbourhood, supposing it might soften the austerity of temper study had occasioned." Accordingly, "he wrote a poem to her, and they commenced corresponding acquaintance." Little was to be expected from verses written by a lover who had adopted his sentiments of preference *pour se desennuyer*. In some of his other poems, particularly the elegy upon Mr. Fairford, traces are remarked, by Dr. Gregory, of the descriptive and personifying powers exerted in the poems of Rowley.

Of Chatterton's prose pieces, the less that is said, the kinder we shall be to his reputation. In the essays which he wrote for periodical publications, as, *The Hunter of Oddities*, *Adventures of a Slave*, and the like, he displays little humour, and great inclination to substitute in its place personal abuse and private slander. The imitations of Ossian, published as translations from the Saxon, are not only utterly incongruous with the style of the language from which he pretended to have rendered them, but are incalculably inferior to the sophisticated productions of Macpherson. This is not to be wondered at. Macpherson, with powers infinitely inferior to those of Chatterton, had the advantage of an intimate acquaintance with the Celtic poetry, much of which he probably interweaved with his own imitations.

The bard of Bristol had only Macpherson to study; and, at an age when bombast is seldom distinguished from sublime, he caricatured, in his Saxon poems, the worst passages of the Pseudo-Ossian.

The present edition contains many prose imitations of the antique, published from Chatterton's MSS. in the British Museum. These are very important, as throwing light upon the Rowleian poems. Some curious passages occur in these documents. While Chatterton wrote plain narrative, he imitated, with considerable success, the dry, concise style of an antique annalist; but when anything required a more dignified or sentimental style, he mounted the fatal and easily recognized car of the son of Fingal. Thus, in an account of St. Marie Magdalene's chapelle, after informing us it "was ybuilden bie Elle, warden of the castle near Elle-gate, Sythina clessen, New-gate—yn this chapelle was ysworne a treatye betweene Goddwynne Erle or Abthane of Kent, Harold eftsoons Kynge of England," &c. &c.; he of a sudden thus changes his tone in commemorating his favourite Elle—"Elle, descended from the kyngelie bloude of Mercyans, raged in the fyghte like a wilde boare in the woode; drearie as a blacke cloude yn ungentle wedder he sweept whole rankes to helle. Lyke to the castle of Bryghstowe was his mind gentle and meeke," &c. &c. Again, in a very sober narrative of the *Ryse of Peyncteyne in Englande*, written by Rowley for his friend Cannynge, after a sort of matter of fact account of various artists, we come to one called *Aflem, a notable perfourmer of the counynge mysterie of steineynge glass.* This person was taken by the Danes, and ordered to be slain. The Dane to whom the execution was intrusted, discovered Aflem to be his brother. At this crisis, Rowley tucks up his monkish frock, and mounts the Celtic Pegasus. "Affrighte chaynede uppe hys soule; ghastnesse dwelled yn his breaste. Oscarre"—(a name of some import, as proving the existing idea in the mind of the author)—"Oscarre, the great Dane, gave histe he should be forslagen; no teares colde availe; the morning, cladde in robes of ghastnesse, was come," &c. &c. An instance of a curious mistake committed by Chatterton, occurs in these excerpts from the Pseudo-Rowley prose writings. In a MS. in Chatterton's handwriting, in the museum, there occur several excerpts from Chaucer, apparently culled to bolster out some

intended imitations. Among others we find the two lines respecting the mormal on the leg of the pilgrim's cook.

> "But great harm was yt, as it thought me,
> That on his skinne a mormall had he."

Skinne is here mis-copied for *shin*. This mistake, and another more whimsical, we can trace into the *Rolle of Seyncte Bartholæmeweis Priorie*, printed in Barrett's History of Bristol, to whom it was commnnicated by Chatterton. Among a list of medical books, said to be preserved in the Infirmary, or *Ache-chamber* of the Priorie, we find *Gylbertines rolle of Ypocrates: the same fryarres booke of brenninge Johan Stowe of the cure of mormalles and the waterie leprosie: the rolle of the blacke mainger*. In a note on these two last articles, we are told, "Chaucer says, on his skin a mormalle had he and a blacke manger." Now, in the first place, Chatterton adhering to his erroneous transcript from Chaucer, of *skinne* for *shinne*, has made Johan Stowe lecture on the cure of mormalles, as if they were, like the leprosy, a cutaneous distemper, and not a cancer upon the bone. But, besides, he has so far mistaken his author, as to take *blanc-manger* a dish of exquisite cookery, which is pronounced by Chaucer to be the cook's masterpiece of skill, for *blacke-mainger*, some strange and nondescript disease, under which he laboured in addition to his *mormal;* and upon which there was a roll or essay in the *Ache-chamber* of St. Bartholomew's priory. Chaucer's words are,

> "But gret harme was it, as it thoughte me,
> That on his *shinne* a mormal hadde he,
> For *blanc-manger* that madê he with the best."

The principal ingredient of blanc-manger (if we recollect) was a cock brayed in a mortar. The resemblance of the letters *n* and *u* in the black-letter, probably led Chatterton to read *blauc* for *blanc;* and as he understood no French, his judgment could not correct his eye. We are thus able decidedly to trace the taste and the errors of Chatterton into the productions of Rowley. We do not, however, suppose that all the information contained in the works of Rowley was actually the invention of Chatterton. The keen eye and ardent research of the young poet, probably traced and interweaved with his narrative traditionary anecdotes preserved in his native city. Nothing that had an antique or

uncouth appearance seems to have escaped his notice. Mr. Tyrwhitt detected a curious instance of his minuteness of remark. In the Ballad of Charité, mention is made of a *horse-millanere*, a phrase at which the reader has usually paused with surprise. In the town of Bristol, and precisely in the street through which Chatterton passed to school, is hung forth a wooden horse decorated with ribbons, purporting to be the sign of a *horse-millanere*.

Nothing can afford a stronger picture of the force and weakness of the human mind, than the readiness with which Chatterton supplied himself and his particular friends with flourishing trees of genealogy, in which the sextons and pewterers of Bristol are deduced from a line of ancestry, which Howards and Hastings might envy, and decorated with all the splendid emblazonment of heraldry. We are mute with astonishment at the grave and sober advice of the sexton's son of Radcliffe to his relation Mr. Stevens of Salisbury: "When you quarter your arms, in the mullet, say Or, a fess, vert, by the name of Chatterton. I trace your family from Fitz-Stephen, son of Stephen, Earl of Aumerle in 1095, son of Od, Earl of Bloys, and Lord of Holdernesse." If the imagination of Chatterton was not actually so far vitiated, as in some degree to believe the reveries which he imposed upon others, we cannot help thinking that as Johnson says of Milton, his impudence must have been at least equal to his stupendous abilities. We were also diverted with the conclusion of the pedigree made out for Mr. Burgum of Bristol, which begins with the Conqueror, and very prudently concludes about the reign of Charles II., when Mr. Burgum might perhaps know something of his ancestors. Chatterton linked and gilded this splended chain of ancestry through all the ages remote enough to have unbounded scope for fiction: when he approached the regions of probability, he let the end loose, that his friend might attach himself to it the best way he could. There is in Cumberland an ancient family, who have long possessed and taken their name from the manor of Brougham, to which Chatterton seems to allude, when he mentions the Castle of Bourgham in Northumberland. But the castle was, we believe, an appendage, not of the De Bourghams, lords of the manor, but of the Veteriponts and Cliffords.

We now dismiss the works of the unfortunate Chatterton,

heartily wishing they may experience from the public kinder treatment than their unfortunate and proud-spirited author. To the admirers of poetry they will ever be acceptable; nor can their history be heedfully perused, without imparting an awful lesson; for the fame of Chatterton is not merely a light to be wondered at—it shines as a beacon to point out the shoals upon which he was wrecked. The youthful reader, if conscious of powers which elevate him above his situation in life, may learn to avoid an overweening reliance upon his abilities, or an injudicious and unfair exertion of them. He may learn, that if neglect or contempt obstruct him in the fair pursuit of fame, it is better to prefer obscurity, than to attain, by the crooked path of literary forgery, the ambiguous reputation of an ingenious imposter. Above all, he may learn to guard against those sallies of an ill-regulated imagination, which buoyed up Chatterton with the most unreasonable expectations, only to plunge him into despair and suicide.* And if there be one who, conscious of inferior mental powers, murmurs at being allotted but "the single talent," and looks with envy on the flights of superior genius, let him read the life of Chatterton, and remember of him it may be truly said—

"Largus et exundans letho dedit ingenii fons."

* ["Chatterton, as appears by the Coroner's Inquest, swallowed arsenic in water, on the 24th of August, 1770, and died the next day. He was buried in a shell, in the burying-ground of Shoe-lane workhouse. Whatever unfinished pieces he might have, he cautiously destroyed before his death; and his room, when broken open, was found covered with little scraps of paper."—Life by Gregory, p. 71.]

RELIQUES OF BURNS.*

[Quarterly Review, 1809.].

We opened a book bearing so interesting a title with no little anxiety. Literary reliques vary in species and value almost as much as those of the Catholic or of the antiquary. Some deserve a golden shrine for their intrinsic merit, some are valued from the pleasing recollections and associations with which they are combined, some, reflecting little honour upon their unfortunate author, are dragged by interested editors from merited obscurity. The character of Burns, on which we may perhaps hazard some remarks in the course of this article, was such as to increase our apprehensions. The extravagance of genius with which this wonderful man was gifted, being in his later and more evil days directed to no fixed or general purpose, was, in the morbid state of his health and feelings, apt to display itself in hasty sallies of virulent and unmerited severity: sallies often regretted by the bard himself; and of which justice to the living and to the dead, alike demanded the suppression. Neither was this anxiety lessened, when we recollected the pious care with which the late excellent Dr. Currie had performed the task of editing the works of Burns. His selection was limited, as much by respect to the fame of the living, as of the dead. He dragged from obscurity none of those satirical effusions, which ought to be as ephemeral as the transcient offences which called them forth. He excluded everything approaching to license, whether in morals or in religion, and thus rendered his collection such, as doubtless Burns himself, in his moments of sober reflection, would have most highly approved. Yet applauding, as we do most highly applaud, the leading principles of Dr.

* *Reliques of Robert Burns.* Collected by R. H. Cromek. 1808.

Currie's selection, we are aware that they sometimes led him into fastidious and over-delicate rejection of the bard's most spirited and happy effusions. A thin octavo published at Glasgow in 1801, under the title of *Poems ascribed to Robert Burns the Ayrshire bard*, furnishes valuable proofs of this assertion. It contains, among a good deal of rubbish, some of his most brilliant poetry. A cantata in particular, called *The Jolly Beggars*, for humorous description and nice discrimination of character, is inferior to no poem of the same length in the whole range of English poetry. The scene indeed is laid in the very lowest department of low life, the actors being a set of strolling vagrants, met to carouse, and barter their rags and plunder for liquor in a hedge ale-house. Yet even in describing the movements of such a group, the native taste of the poet has never suffered his pen to slide into anything coarse or disgusting. The extravagant glee and outrageous frolic of the beggars are ridiculously contrasted with their maimed limbs, rags, and crutches—the sordid and squalid circumstances of their appearance are judiciously thrown into the shade. Nor is the art of the poet less conspicuous in the individual figures, than in the general mass. The festive vagrants are distinguished from each other by personal appearance and character, as much as any fortuitous assembly in the higher orders of life. The group, it must be observed, is of Scottish character, and doubtless our northern brethren are more familiar with its varieties than we are; yet the distinctions are too well marked to escape even the South'ron. The most prominent persons are a maimed soldier and his female companion, a hackneyed follower of the camp, a stroller, late the consort of an Highland ketterer or sturdy beggar,—"but weary fa' the waefu' woodie!"—Being now at liberty, she becomes an object of rivalry between a "pigmy scraper with his fiddle" and a strolling tinker. The latter, a desperate bandit, like most of his profession, terrifies the musician out of the field, and is preferred by the damsel of course. A wandering ballad-singer, with a brace of doxies, is last introduced upon the stage. Each of these mendicants sings a song in character, and such a collection of humorous lyrics connected by vivid poetical description, is not, perhaps, to be paralleled in the English language. As the collection and the poem are very little

known in England, and as it is certainly apposite to the Reliques of Robert Burns, we venture to transcribe the concluding ditty, chaunted by the ballad-singer at the request of the company, whose "mirth and fun have now grown fast and furious," and set them above all sublunary terrors of jails, stocks, and whipping posts. It is certainly far superior to anything in the *Beggars' Opera*, where alone we could expect to find its parallel.

"Then ou're again, the jovial thrang
  The poet did request,
To loose his pack an' wale a sang,
  A ballad o' the best:

He rising, rejoicing
  Between his twa Deborahs,
Looks round him, an' found them
  Impatient for the chorus.

AIR.

See! the smoking bowl before us,
  Mark our jovial ragged ring!
Round and round take up the chorus,
  And in raptures let us sing.

Chorus—A fig for those by law protected!
  Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
  Churches built to please the priest.

What is title? what is treasure?
  What is reputation's care?
If we lead a life of pleasure,
  'Tis no matter *how or where!*
    A fig, &c.

With the ready trick and fable,
  Round we wander all the day;
And at night, in barn or stable,
  Hug our doxies on the hay.
    A fig, &c.

Does the train-attended carriage
  Through the country lighter rove?
Does the sober bed of marriage
  Witness brighter scenes of love?
    A fig, &c.

Life is all a variorum,
  We regard not how it goes,
Let them cant about decorum
  Who have characters to lose.
    A fig, &c.

Here's to budgets, bags, and wallets!
Here's to all the wandering train!
Here's our ragged *brats and callets!*
One and all cry out, Amen!
A fig, &c.

We are at a loss to conceive any good reason why Dr. Currie did not introduce this singular and humorous cantata into his collection. It is true, that in one or two passages the muse has trespassed slightly upon decorum, where, in the language of Scottish song,

"High kilted was she
As she gaed ower the lea."

Something, however, is to be allowed to the nature of the subject, and something to the education of the poet; and if, from veneration to the names of Swift and Dryden, we tolerate the grossness of the one, and the indelicacy of the other, the respect due to that of Burns may surely claim indulgence for a few light strokes of broad humour. The same collection contains *Holy Willie's Prayer*, a piece of satire more exquisitely severe than any which Burns afterwards wrote, but unfortunately cast in a form too daringly profane to be received into Dr. Currie's collection.

Knowing that these, and hoping that other compositions of similar spirit and tenor might yet be recovered, we were induced to think, that some of them, at least, had found a place in the collection now given to the public by Mr. Cromek; but he has neither risked the censure, nor laid claim to the applause, which might have belonged to such an undertaking. The contents of the volume before us are more properly gleanings than relics—the refuse and sweepings of the shop, rather than the commodities which might be deemed contraband. Yet even these scraps and remnants contain articles of curiosity and value, tending to throw light on the character of one of the most singular men by whose appearance our age has been distinguished.

The first portion of the volume contains nearly two hundred pages of letters, addressed by Burns to various individuals, written in varions tones of feeling and modes of mind—in some instances exhibiting all the force of the writer's talents, in others only valuable because they bear his signature. The avidity with which the reader ever devours this species of publication, has been traced to the de-

sire of seeing the mind and opinions of celebrated men in their open and undisguised moments, and of perusing and appreciating their thoughts while the gold is yet rude ore, ere it is refined and manufactured into polished sentences or sounding stanzas. But, notwithstanding these fair pretences, we doubt if this appetite can be referred to any more honourable source than the love of anecdote and private history. In fact, letters—at least those of a general and miscellaneous kind—very rarely contain the real opinions of the writer. If an author sits down to the task of formally composing a work for the use of the public, he has previously considered his subject, and made up his mind both on the opinions he is to express, and on the mode of supporting them. But the same man usually writes a letter only because the letter must be written—is probably never more at a loss than when looking for a subject—and treats it, when found, rather so as to gratify his correspondent, than communicate his own feelings. The letters of Burns, although containing passages of great eloquence, and expressive of the intense fire of his disposition, are not exceptions from this general rule. They bear occasionally strong marks of affectation, with a tinge of pedantry rather foreign from the bard's character and education. The following paragraphs illustrate both the excellencies and faults of his epistolary composition. Nothing can be more humorously imagined and embodied than the sage group of Wisdom and Prudence in the first, while the affectation of the second amounts to absolute rant.

"Do tell that to Lady M'Kenzie, that she may give me credit for a little wisdom. 'I Wisdom dwell with Prudence.' What a blessed fire-side!—How happy should I be to pass a winter evening under their venerable roof! and smoke a pipe of tobacco, or drink water-gruel with them! What solemn, lengthened, laughter-quashing gravity of phiz! What sage remarks on the good-for-nothing sons and daughters of indiscretion and folly!—and what frugal lessons, as we straightened the fire-side circle, on the uses of the poker and tongs!"

"Miss N. is very well, and begs to be remembered in the old way to you. I used all my eloquence, all the persuasive flourishes of the hand, and heart-melting modulation of periods in my power, to urge her out to Herveiston, but all in vain. My rhetoric seems quite to have lost its effect on the lovely half of mankind. I have seen the day—but that is a 'tale of other years'—in my conscience I believe that my heart has been so oft on fire that it is absolutely vitrified. I look on the sex with something like the

admiration with which I regard the starry sky in a frosty December night. I admire the beauty of the Creator's workmanship; I am charmed with the wild but graceful eccentricity of their motions, and—wish them good night. I mean this with respect to a certain passion *dont j'ai eu l'honneur d'être un miserable esclave*: as for friendship, you and Charlotte have given me pleasure, permanent pleasure, 'which the world cannot give, nor take away' I hope; and which will outlast the heavens and the earth."

In the same false taste, Burns utters such tirades as this:—

"Whether in the way of my trade, I can be of any service to the Rev. Doctor,* is I fear very doubtful. Ajax's shield consisted, I think, of seven bull hides and a plate of brass, which altogether set Hector's utmost force at defiance. Alas! I am not a Hector, and the worthy Doctor's foes are as securely armed as Ajax was. Ignorance, superstition, bigotry, stupidity, malevolence, self-conceit, envy—all strongly bound in a massy frame of brazen impudence. Good God, sir! to such a shield, humour is the peck of a sparrow, and satire the pop-gun of a school-boy. Creation-disgracing *scelerats* such as they, God only can mend, and the devil only can punish. In the comprehending way of Caligula, I wish they had all but one neck. I feel impotent as a child to the ardour of my wishes! O for a withering curse to blast the germins of their wicked machinations. O for a poisonous tornado, winged from the Torrid Zone of Tartarus, to sweep the spreading crop of their villanous contrivances to the lowest hell!"

These passages, however, in which the author seems to have got the better of the man,—in which the desire of shining, and blazing, and thundering, supersedes the natural expressions of feeling, and passion, are less frequent in the letters of Burns than perhaps of any other professed writer. Burns was, in truth, the child of passion and feeling. His character was not simply that of a peasant exalted into notice by uncommon literary attainments, but bore a stamp which must have distinguished him in the highest as in the lowest situation in life. To ascertain what was his natural temper and disposition, and how far it was altered or modified by the circumstances of birth, education, and fortune, might be a subject for a long essay, but to mark a few distinctions is all that can be here expected from us.

We have said that Robert Burns was the child of impulse and feeling. Of the steady principle which cleaves to that

* Dr. M'Gill, of Ayr. The poet gives the best illustration of this letter in one addressed to Mr. Graham.—*Dr. Currie's Ed.* No. 86.

which is good, he was unfortunately divested by the violence of those passions which finally wrecked him. It is most affecting to add, that while swimming, struggling, and finally yielding to the torrent, he never lost sight of the beacon which ought to have guided him to land, yet never profited by its light.

We learn his opinion of his own temperament in the following emphatic burst of passion:—

"God have mercy on me! a poor d——d, incautious, duped, unfortunate fool! The sport, the miserable victim, of rebellious pride, hypochondriac imagination, agonizing sensibility, and bedlam passions!"

"Come, stubborn pride and unshrinking resolution, accompany me through this to me miserable world!" In such language did this powerful but untamed mind express the irritation of prolonged expectation and disappointed hope, which slight reflection might have pointed out as the common fate of mortality. Burns neither acknowledged adversity as the "tamer of the human breast," nor knew the golden curb which discretion hangs upon passion. He even appears to have felt a gloomy pleasure in braving the encounter of evils which prudence might have avoided, and to have thought that there could be no pleasurable existence between the extremes of licentious frenzy and of torpid sensuality. "There are two only creatures that I would envy. —A horse in his wild state traversing the forests of Asia, —and an oyster on some of the desert shores of Europe. The one has not a wish without enjoyment; the other has neither wish nor fear." When such a sentiment is breathed by such a being, the lesson is awful: and if pride and ambition were capable of being taught, they might hence learn that a well-regulated mind and controlled passions are to be prized above all the glow of imagination, and all the splendour of genius.

We discover the same stubborn resolution rather to endure with patience the consequences of error, than to own and avoid it in future, in the poet's singular choice of a pattern of fortitude.

"I have bought a pocket Milton, which I carry perpetually about with me, in order to study the sentiments—the dauntless magnanimity, the intrepid, unyielding independence, the desperate daring and noble defiance of hardship, in that great personage, SATAN."

Nor was this a rash or precipitate choice, for in a more apologetic mood he expresses the same opinion of the same personage.

"My favourite feature in Milton's Satan is his manly fortitude in supporting what cannot be remedied—in short, the wild, broken fragments of a noble, exalted mind in ruins. I meant no more by saying he was a favourite hero of mine."

With this lofty and unbending spirit were connected a love of independence and a hatred of control amounting almost to the sublime rant of Almanzor.

"He was as free as nature first made man,
Ere the base laws of servitude began,
When wild in woods the noble savage ran."

In general society Burns often permitted his determination of vindicating his personal dignity to hurry him into unjustifiable resentment of slight or imagined neglect. He was ever anxious to maintain his post in society, and to extort that deference which was readily paid to him by all from whom it was worth claiming. This ill-judged jealousy of precedence led him often to place his own pretensions to notice in competition with those of the company who, he conceived, might found theirs on birth or fortune. On such occasions it was no easy task to deal with Burns. The power of his language, the vigour of his satire, the severity of illustration with which his fancy instantly supplied him, bore down all retort. Neither was it possible to exercise over the poet that restraint which arises from the chance of further personal consequences. The dignity, the spirit, the indignation of Burns was that of a plebeian, of a high-souled plebeian indeed, of a citizen of Rome or Athens, but still of a plebeian untinged with the slightest shade of that spirit of chivalry which, since the feudal times, has pervaded the higher ranks of European society. This must not be imputed to cowardice, for Burns was no coward. But the lowness of his birth, and habits of society, prevented rules of punctilious delicacy from making any part of his education; nor did he, it would seem, see anything so rational in the practice of duelling, as afterwards to adopt or to affect the sentiments of the higher ranks upon that subject. A letter to Mr. Clarke, written after a quarrel upon political topics, has these remarkable, and we will add manly expressions.

> "From the expressions Capt. ———— made use of to me, had I had nobody's welfare to care for but my own, we should certainly have come, according to the manners of the world, to the necessity of murdering one another about the business. The words were such as, generally, I believe, end in a brace of pistols; but I am still pleased to think that I did not ruin the peace and welfare of a wife and a family of children in a drunken squabble."

In this point, therefore, the pride and high spirit of Burns differed from those of the world around him. But if he wanted that chivalrous sensibility of honour which places reason upon the sword's point, he had delicacy of another sort, which those who boast most of the former do not always possess in the same purity. Although so poor as to be ever on the very brink of absolute ruin, looking forwards now to the situation of a foot-soldier, now to that of a common beggar, as no unnatural consummation of his evil fortune, Burns was, in pecuniary transactions, as proud and independent as if possessed of a prince's revenue. Bred a peasant, and preferred to the degrading situation of a common exciseman, neither the influence of the low-minded crowd around him, nor the gratification of selfish indulgence, nor that contempt of futurity, which has characterized so many of his poetical brethren, ever led him to incur or endure the burden of pecuniary obligation. A very intimate friend of the poet, from whom he used occasionally to borrow a small sum for a week or two, once ventured to hint that the punctuality with which the loan was always replaced at the appointed time was unnecessary and unkind. The consequence of this hint was the interruption of their friendship for some weeks, the bard disdaining the very thought of being indebted to a human being one farthing beyond what he could discharge with the most rigid punctuality. It was a less pleasing consequence of this high spirit that Burns was utterly inaccessible to all friendly advice. To lay before him his errors, or to point out their consequences, was to touch a string that jarred every feeling within him. On such occasions, his, like Churchill's, was

> "The mind which, startling, heaves the heartfelt groan,
> And hates the form she knows to be her own."

It is a dreadful truth, that when racked and tortured by the well-meant and warm expostulations of an intimate friend, he at length started up in a paroxysm of frenzy, and

drawing a sword cane, which he usually wore, made an attempt to plunge it into the body of his adviser—the next instant he was with difficulty withheld from suicide.

Yet this ardent and irritable temperament had its periods, not merely of tranquillity, but of the most subduing tenderness. In the society of men of taste, who could relish and understand his conversation, or whose rank in life was not so much raised above his own as to require, in his opinion, the assertion of his dignity, he was eloquent, impressive, and instructing. But it was in female circles that his powers of expression displayed their utmost fascination. In such, where the respect demanded by rank was readily paid as due to beauty or accomplishment; where he could resent no insult, and vindicate no claim of superiority, his conversation lost all its harshness, and often became so energetic and impressive, as to dissolve the whole circle into tears. The traits of sensibility which, told of another, would sound like instances of gross affectation, were so native to the soul of this extraordinary man, and burst from him so involuntarily, that they not only obtained full credence as the genuine feelings of his own heart, but melted into unthought-of sympathy all who witnessed them. In such a mood they were often called forth by the slightest and most trifling occurrences; an ordinary engraving, the wild turn of a simple Scottish air, a line in an old ballad, were, like "the field mouse's nest" and "the uprooted daisy," sufficient to excite the sympathetic feelings of Burns. And it was wonderful to see those, who, left to themselves, would have passed over such trivial circumstances without a moment's reflection, sob over the picture, when its outline had been filled up by the magic art of his eloquence.

The political predilections, for they could hardly be termed principles, of Burns, were entirely determined by his feelings. At his first appearance, he felt, or affected, a propensity to jacobitism. Indeed a youth of his warm imagination and ardent patriotism, brought up in Scotland thirty years ago, could hardly escape this bias. The side of Charles Edward was the party, not surely of sound sense and sober reason, but of romantic gallantry and high achievement. The inadequacy of the means by which that prince attempted to regain the crown, forfeited by his fathers, the strange and almost poetical adventures which he

underwent, the Scottish martial character honoured in his victories, and degraded and crushed in his defeat, the tales of the veterans who had followed his adventurous standard, were all calculated to impress upon the mind of a poet a warm interest in the cause of the house of Stuart. Yet the impression was not of a very serious cast; for Burns himself acknowledges in one of these letters that, "to tell the matter of fact, except when my passions were heated by some accidental cause, my jacobitism was merely by way of *vive la bagatelle*," p. 240. The same enthusiastic ardour of disposition swayed Burns in his choice of political tenets, when the country was agitated by revolutionary principles. That the poet should have chosen the side on which high talents were most likely to procure celebrity; that he to whom the factitious distinctions of society were always odious, should have listened with complacence to the voice of French philosophy, which denounced them as usurpations on the rights of man, was precisely the thing to be expected. Yet we cannot but think that if his superiors in the Excise department had tried the experiment of soothing rather than of irritating his feelings, they might have spared themselves the disgrace of rendering desperate the possessor of such uncommon talents. For it is but too certain that from the moment his hopes of promotion were utterly blasted, his tendency to dissipation hurried him precipitately into those excesses which shortened his life. We doubt not that in that awful period of national discord he had done and said enough to deter, in ordinary cases, the servants of government from countenancing an avowed partisan of faction. But this partisan was Burns!—Surely the experiment of lenity might have been tried, and perhaps successfully. The conduct of Mr. Graham of Fintray, our poet's only shield against actual dismission, and consequent ruin, reflects the highest credit upon that gentleman. We may dismiss these reflections on the character of Burns with his own beautiful lines.

"I saw thy pulse's maddening play,
Wild send thee pleasure's devious way,
By passion driven:
But yet the light that led astray,
Was light from heaven."

The second part of this volume contains a number of

memoranda by Burns, concerning the Scottish songs and music published by Johnson, in six volumes 8vo.—Many of these appear to us exceedingly trifling. They might indeed have adorned, with great propriety, a second edition of the work in question, or any other collection of Scottish songs; but, separated from the verses to which they relate, how can any one be interested in learning that *Down the Burn Davie* was the composition of David Maigh, keeper of blood-hounds to the Laird of Riddel; that *Tarry woo* was, in the opinion of Burns, a "very pretty song;" or even that the author of *Polwarth on the Green* was "Captain John Drummond MacGrigor, of the family of Bochaldie?" Were it of consequence, we might correct the valuable information thus conveyed, in one or two instances, and enlarge it in many others. But it seems of more importance to mark the share which the poet himself took in compiling or embellishing this collection of traditional poetry, especially as it has not been distinctly explained either by Dr. Currie or Mr. Cromek. Tradition, generally speaking, is a sort of perverted alchymy which converts gold into lead. All that is abstractedly poetical, all that is above the comprehension of the merest peasant, is apt to escape in frequent recitation; and the *lacunæ*, thus created, are filled up either by lines from other ditties, or from the mother wit of the reciter or singer. The injury, in either case, is obvious and irreparable. But with all these disadvantages, the Scottish songs and tunes preserved for Burns that inexpressible charm which they have ever afforded to his countrymen. He entered into the idea of collecting their fragments with all the zeal of an enthusiast; and few, whether serious or humorous, pass through his hands without receiving some of those magic touches, which, without greatly altering the song, restored its original spirit, or gave it more than it had ever possessed. So dexterously are these touches combined with the ancient structure, that the *rifaccimento*, in many instances, could scarcely have been detected, without the avowal of the bard himself. Neither would it be easy to mark his share in the individual ditties. Some he appears entirely to have re-written; to others he added supplementary stanzas; in some he retained only the leading lines and the chorus, and others he merely arranged and ornamented. For the benefit of future antiquaries, however we may observe that

many of the songs, claimed by the present editor as the exclusive composition of Burns, were, in reality, current long before he was born. Let us take one of the best examples of his skill in imitating the old ballad.—*M'Pherson's Lament* was a well-known song many years before the Ayrshire Bard wrote those additional verses which constitute its principal merit. This noted freebooter was executed at Inverness, about the beginning of the last century. When he came to the fatal tree, he played the tune to which he has bequeathed his name upon a favourite violin, and holding up the instrument, offered it to any one of his clan who would undertake to play the tune over his body at his lyke-wake: as none answered, he dashed it to pieces on the executioner's head, and flung himself from the ladder. The following are the wild stanzas, grounded, however, upon some traditional remains,* which Burns has put into the mouth of this desperado.—

M'PHERSON'S FAREWELL.

Farewell, ye dungeons dark and strong,
The wretch's destiny!
M'Pherson's time will not be long,
On yonder gallows tree.
Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he;
He play'd a spring, and danced it round,
Below the gallows tree.

O what is death but parting breath?—
On many a bloody plain
I've dar'd his face, and in this place
I scorn him yet again!
Sae rantingly, &c.

Untie these bands from off my hands,
And bring to me my sword;
And there's no a man in all Scotland,
But I'll brave him at a word.
Sae rantingly, &c.

I've liv'd a life of sturt and strife;
I die by treacherie:

* We have heard some of these recited, particularly one which begins—
" Now farewell, house, and farewell, friends,
And farewell, wife and bairns,
There's nae repentance in my heart,
The fiddle's in my arms"—
* * *

It burns my heart I must depart
  And not avenged be.
    Sae rantingly, &c.

Now farewell light, thou sunshine bright,
  And all beneath the sky!
May coward shame distain his name,
  The wretch that dares not die!
    Sae rantingly, &c.

How much Burns delighted in the task of eking out the ancient melodies of his country, appears from the following affecting passage in a letter written to Mr. Johnson, shortly before his death.

"You are a good, worthy, honest fellow, and have a good right to live in this world—because you deserve it. Many a merry meeting this publication has given us, and possibly it may give us more, though, alas! I fear it. This protracting, slow, consuming illness which hangs over me, will, I doubt much, my ever dear friend, arrest my sun before he has well reached his middle career, and will turn over the Poet to far other and more important concerns than studying the brilliancy of wit, or the pathos of sentiment! However, *hope* is the cordial of the human heart, and I endeavour to cherish it as well as I can."

Notwitstanding the spirit of many of the lyrics of Burns, and the exquisite sweetness and simplicity of others, we cannot but deeply regret that so much of his time and talents was frittered away in compiling and composing for musical collections. There is sufficient evidence both in the edition of Dr. Currie, and in this supplemental volume, that even the genius of Burns could not support him in the monotonous task of writing love verses on heaving bosoms and sparkling eyes, and twisting them into such rhythmical forms as might suit the capricious evolutions of Scotch reels, ports, and strathspeys. Besides, this constant waste of his fancy and power of verse in small and insignificant compositions, must necessarily have no little effect in deterring him from undertaking any grave or important task. Let no one suppose that we undervalue the songs of Burns. When his soul was intent on suiting a favourite air with words humorous or tender, as the subject demanded, no poet of our tongue ever displayed higher skill in marrying melody to immortal verse. But the writing of a series of songs for large musical collections, degenerated into a slavish labour, which no talents could support, led to negli-

gence, and above all, diverted the poet from his grand plan of dramatic composition.

To produce a work of this kind, neither perhaps a regular tragedy nor comedy, but something partaking of the nature of both, seems to have been long the cherished wish of Burns. He had even fixed on the subject, which was an adventure in low life, said to have happened to Robert Bruce, while wandering in danger and disguise after being defeated by the English. The Scottish dialect would have rendered such a piece totally unfit for the stage: but those who recollect the masculine and lofty tone of martial spirit which glows in the poem of Bannockburn, will sigh to think what the character of the gallant Bruce might have proved under the hand of Burns! It would undoubtedly have wanted that tinge of chivalrous feeling which the manners of the age, no less than the disposition of the monarch, imperiously demanded; but this deficiency would have been more than supplied by a bard who could have drawn from his own perceptions the unbending energy of a hero, sustaining the desertion of friends, the persecution of enemies, and the utmost malice of disastrous fortune. The scene, too, being partly laid in humble life, admitted that display of broad humour and exquisite pathos, with which he could interchangeably and at pleasure adorn his cottage views. Nor was the assemblage of familiar sentiments incompatible in Burns with those of the most exalted dignity. In the inimitable tale of Tam o' Shanter, he has left us sufficient evidence of his ability to combine the ludicrous with the awful and even the horrible. No poet, with the exception of Shakspeare, ever possessed the power of exciting the most varied and discordant emotions with such rapid transitions. His humorous description of the appearance of Death (in the poem on Dr. Hornbook) borders on the terrific, and the witches' dance, in the Kirk of Alloway, is at once ludicrous and horrible. Deeply must we then regret those avocations which diverted a fancy so varied and so vigorous, joined with language and expressions suited to all its changes, from leaving a more substantial monument to his own fame and to the honour of his country.

The next division is a collection of fugitive sentences and common places, extracted partly from the memorandum book of the poet, and partly, we believe, from letters which

could not be published in their entire state. Many of these appear to be drawn from a small volume, entitled "Letters to Clarinda, by Robert Burns," which was printed at Glasgow, but afterwards suppressed. To these, the observations which we offered on the bard's letters in general, apply with additional force: for in such a selection, the splendid patches, the showy, declamatory, figurative effusions of sentimental affectation, are usually the choice of the editor. Respect for the mighty dead, prevents our quoting instances in which Burns has degraded his natural eloquence by these meretricious ornaments. Indeed his style is sometimes so forced and unnatural, that we must believe he knew to whom he was writing, and that an affectation of enthusiasm in platonic love and devotion, was more likely to be acceptable to the fair Clarinda, than the true language of feeling. The following loose and laboured passage shows that the passion of *Sylvander* (a name sufficient of itself to damn a whole file of love-letters) had more of vanity than of real sentiment:—

"What trifling silliness is the childish fondness of the every-day children of the world! 'Tis the unmeaning toying of the younglings of the fields and forests: but where sentiment and fancy unite their sweets; where taste and delicacy refine; where wit adds the flavour, and good sense gives strength and spirit to all, what a delicious draught is the hour of tender endearment! beauty and grace in the arms of truth and honour, in all the luxury of mutual love!"

The last part of the work comprehends a few original poems—epistles, prologues, and songs,—by which, if the author's reputation had not been previously established, we will venture to say it would never have risen above the common standard. At the same time there are few of them that do not, upon minute examination, exhibit marks of Burns's hand, though not of his best manner. The following exquisitely affecting stanza contains the essence of a thousand love tales:—

"Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

There are one or two political songs, which, for any wit or humour they contain, might have been very well omitted. The satirical effusions of Burns, when they related to per-

sons or subjects removed from his own sphere of observation, were too vague and too coarse to be poignant. There are a few attempts at *English* verse, in which, as usual, Burns falls beneath himself. This is more remarkable, as the sublimer passages of his "Saturday Night," "Vision," and other poems of celebrity, always swell into the language of classic English poetry. But although in these flights he naturally and almost unavoidably assumed the dialect of Milton and Shakspeare, he never seems to have been completely at his ease when he had not the power of descending at pleasure into that which was familiar to his ear, and to his habits. In the one case, his use of the English was voluntary, and for a short time; but when assumed as a primary and indispensable rule of composition, the comparative penury of rhymes, and the want of a thousand emphatic words which his habitual acquaintance with the Scottish supplied, rendered his expression confined and embarrassed. No man ever had more command of this ancient Doric dialect than Burns. He has left a curious testimony of his skill, in a letter to Mr. Nicol, published in this volume; an attempt to read a sentence of which, would break the teeth of most modern Scotchmen.

Three or four letters from William Burns, a brother of the poet, are introduced for no purpose that we can guess, unless to show that he wrote and thought like an ordinary journeyman saddler. We would readily have believed, without positive proof, that the splendid powers of the poet were not imparted to the rest of his family.

We scarcely know, upon the whole, in what terms we ought to dismiss Mr. Cromek. If the reputation of Burns alone be considered, this volume cannot add to his fame; and it is too well fixed to admit of degradation. The Cantata already mentioned, is indeed the only one of his productions not published by Dr. Currie, which we consider as not merely justifying, but increasing his renown. It is enough to say of the very best of those now published, that they take nothing from it. What the public may gain by being furnished with additional means of estimating the character of this wonderful and self-taught genius, we have already endeavoured to state. We know not whether the family of the poet will derive any advantage from this publication of his remains. If so, it is the best apology for their

being given to the world; if not, we have no doubt that tl editor, as he is an admirer of Chaucer, has read of a certa pardoner, who

> ——"with his *relics* when that he fond
> A poor persone dwelling up on lond,
> Upon a day he gat him more moneie
> Than that the persone got in monethes tweie."

CAMPBELL'S GERTRUDE OF WYOMING, &c.

[Quarterly Review, May, 1809.]

We open this volume with no ordinary impression of the delicacy and importance of the task which it imposes on us, and the difficulty of discharging it, at once with justice to the author, and to that public at whose bar we, as well as Mr. Campbell, must be considered to stand. It is not our least embarrassment, that, in some respects, Mr. Campbell may be considered as his own rival; and, in aspiring to extensive popularity, has certainly no impediment to encounter more formidable than the extent of his own reputation. To decide on the merit of *Gertrude of Wyoming* as the work of a poet hitherto undistinguished, would be comparatively easy. But we are unavoidably forced upon comparing it with Mr. Campbell's former pieces; and, while our judgment is embroiled by the predilections, prejudices, and preferences, which the recollection of them has imprinted upon our imagination—there are other peculiar circumstances which enhance expectation, and increase proportionally the difficulty of affording it complete gratification.

The Pleasures of Hope, a poem dear to every reader of poetry, bore, amidst many beauties, the marks of a juvenile composition, and received from the public the indulgence due to a promise of future excellence. Some license was also allowed for the didactic nature of the subject; which, prescribing no fixed plan, left the poet free to indulge his fancy in excursions as irregular as they are elegant and animated. It is a consequence of both these circumstances that the poem presents in some degree the appearance of an unfinished picture. In gazing with pleasure on its insulated groups and figures, the reflection will often intrude, that an artist, matured in taste and experience, would have methodized his subject, filled up the intermediate spaces, and

brought to perfection a sketch of so much promise. The public readily made every allowance that could be claimed on the score of youth—a seeming generosity often conferred on the first essays of poets, painters, and orators, but for which a claim of repayment, with usurious interest, is regularly preferred against them upon their next appearance. But the hope of improvement was, in Mr. Campbell's case, hardly necessary to augment the expectation raised by the actual excellence of his first poem. The beauties of a highly polished versification—that animated and vigorous tone of moral feeling—that turn of expression, which united the sweetness of Goldsmith with the strength of Johnson—a structure of language alike remote from servile imitation of our more classical poets, and from the babbling and jingling simplicity of ruder minstrels—new, but not singular—elegant but not trite—justified the admirers of *The Pleasures of Hope* in elevating its author to a pre-eminent situation among living poets. Neither did Mr. Campbell suffer the admiration excited by his first essay to subside or be forgotten. From time to time we were favoured with exquisite lyrical effusions, calculated rather to stimulate than to gratify the public appetite. The splendid poems of *Hohenlinden*, and *Lochiel*, manifesting high powers of imagination, and other short performances, replete either with animation or tenderness, seemed to declare their author destined to attain the very summit of the modern Parnassus. By some, this pre-eminence was already adjudged to him; while others only adjourned their suffrage, until a more daring, extended, and sustained flight, should make good the promises of his juvenile work, and of his shorter detached poems.

It has for a considerable time been known, that a new poem, of some length, was in Mr. Campbell's contemplation; and when it was whispered, that he who sung the doubtful conflict of Hohenlinden, and the carnage of Culloden, had chosen for his theme the devastation of Wyoming, expectation was raised to its height. Desire was not too suddenly quenched; and it is only after a long period of suspense that the work has been given to the public. But it is no easy matter to satisfy the vague and indefinite expectation which suspense of this nature seldom fails to excite. Each reader is apt to form an idea of the subject, the narrative, and the

style of execution; so that the real poem is tried and censured not upon its own merits, but for differing from the preconceived dream of the critic's imagination. There are few who have not felt disappointment of a similar nature on visiting for the first time, any spot highly celebrated for its scenery. Expectation has not only exaggerated its beauties, but often sketched a landscape of its own, which the mind unwillingly exchanges even for the most splendid reality. Perhaps, therefore, it is a natural consequence of overstrained hope, that the immediate reception of *Gertrude of Wyoming* should be less eminently favourable than the intrinsic merit of the poem, and the acknowledged genius of the author, appear to ensure; and perhaps, too, we may be able, in the course of our investigation, to point out other reasons which may for a season impede the popularity of a poem containing passages, both of tenderness and sublimity, which may decline comparison with few in the English language.

The tale of *Gertrude of Wyoming* is abundantly simple. It refers to the desolation of a beautiful tract of country, situated on both sides of the Susquehanna, and inhabited by colonists, whose primæval simplicity and hospitality recalled the idea of the golden age. In 1778, Wyoming, this favoured and happy spot, was completely laid waste by an incursion of Indians and civilized savages, under a leader named Brandt. The pretext was, the adherence of the inhabitants to the provincial confederacy; but the lust of rapine and cruelty which distinguished the invaders, was such as to add double horrors even to civil conflict.

We do not condemn this choice of a subject in itself eminently fitted for poetry; yet feeling as Englishmen we cannot suppress a hope that Mr. Campbell will in his subsequent poems choose a theme more honourable to our national character, than one in which Britain was disgraced by the atrocities of her pretended adherents. We do not love to have our feelings unnecessarily put in arms against the cause of our country. The historian must do his duty when such painful subjects occur; but the poet who may choose his theme through the whole unbounded range of truth and fiction may well excuse himself from selecting a subject dishonourable to his own land.

Although the calamity was general, and overwhelmed the

whole settlement of Wyoming, Mr. Campbell has judiciously selected a single group as the subject of his picture; yet we have room to regret that in some passages at least he has not extended his canvass to exhibit, in the background, that general scene of tumult and horror which might have added force to the striking picture which he has drawn of individual misery.

The opening of the poem describes Wyoming in a state of more than Arcadian ease and happiness, where exiles or emigrants from all quarters of Europe met in peace, and contended only which should best adorn and improve their seat of refuge. The following stanzas comprehend this interesting description, and are at the same time a just specimen of the style and structure of the poem.

"On Susquehanna's side, fair Wyoming,
Although the wild-flower on thy ruined wall
And roofless homes a sad remembrance bring
Of what thy gentle people did befall,
Yet thou wert once the loveliest land of all
That see the Atlantic wave their morn restore.
Sweet land! may I thy lost delights recall,
And paint thy Gertrude in her bow'rs of yore,
Whose beauty was the love of Pennsylvania's shore!

"It was beneath thy skies that, but to prune
His Autumn fruits, or skim the light canoe,
Perchance, along thy river calm at noon,
The happy shepherd swain had naught to do
From morn till evening's sweeter pastime grew;
Their timbrel, in the dance of forest brown
When lovely maidens prankt in flowret new,
And aye, those sunny mountains half way down
Would echo flagelet from some romantic town.

"Then, where of Indian hills the daylight takes
His leave, how might you the flamingo see
Disporting like a meteor on the lakes—
And playful squirrel on his nut-grown tree:
And every sound of life was full of glee,
From merry mock-bird's song, or hum of men,
While heark'ning, fearing naught their revelry,
The wild deer arch'd his neck from glades, and then
Unhunted, sought his woods and wilderness again.

"And scarce had Wyoming of war or crime
Heard but in transatlantic story rung,
For here the exile met from ev'ry clime,
And spoke in friendship ev'ry distant tongue;
Men from the blood of warring Europe sprung,

Were but divided by the running brook;
And happy where no Rhenish trumpet sung,
On plains no sieging mine's volcano shook,
The blue-ey'd German chang'd his sword to pruning hook.

"Nor far some Andalusian saraband
Would sound to many a native rondelay.
But who is he that yet a dearer land
Remembers, over hills and far away?
Green Albyn! what though he no more survey
Thy ships at anchor on the quiet shore,
Thy pellochs rolling from the mountain bay;
Thy lone sepulchral cairn upon the moor,
And distant isles that hear the loud Corbrechtan roar!

"Alas! poor Caledonia's mountaineer,
That want's stern edict e'er, and feudal grief,
Had forced him from a home he loved so dear!
Yet found he here a home, and glad relief,
And plied the beverage from his own fair sheaf,
That fired his Highland blood with mickle glee;
And England sent her men, of men the chief,
Who taught those sires of Empire yet to be,
To plant the tree of life; to plant fair freedom's tree!

"Here was not mingled in the city's pomp
Of life's extremes, the grandeur and the gloom;
Judgment awoke not here her dismal tromp,
Nor seal'd in blood a fellow-creature's doom,
Nor mourn'd the captive in a living tomb.
One venerable man, beloved of all,
Sufficed where innocence was yet in bloom,
To sway the strife, that seldom might befall,
And Albert was their judge in patriarchal hall."

This Albert, the judge and patriarch of the infant settlement, is an Englishman; Gertrude, the heroine of the poem, is his only child. The chaste and affecting simplicity of the following picture would furnish a beautiful subject for the pencil.

"I may not paint those thousand infant chams;
(Unconscious fascination, undesigned!)
The orison repeated in his arms,
For God to bless her sire and all mankind;
The book, the bosom on his knee reclined,
Or how sweet fairy-lore he heard her con,
(The playmate ere the teacher of her mind);
All uncompanion'd else her years had gone
Till now in Gertrude's eyes their ninth blue summer shone."

An Indian, of a tribe friendly to the settlers, approaches their cottage one morning, leading in his hand an English boy

"Of Christian vesture and complexion bright,
Led by his dusky guide like morning brought by night."

The swarthy warrior tells Albert of a frontier fort, occupied by the British, which had been stormed and destroyed by a party of Hurons, the allies of France. The Oneyda chief, who narrates the story, hastened to aid, but only arrived in time to avenge its defenders. All had been massacred, excepting the widow of the commander of the garrison and her son, a boy of ten or twelve years old. The former, exhausted with fatigue and grief, dies in the arms of the friendly Indians, and bequeaths to their chief the task of conducting her son to Albert's care, with a token to express that he was the son of Julia Waldegrave. Albert instantly recognises the boy as the offspring of two old and dear friends. A flood of kindly recollections, and the bitter contrast between the promise of their early days and the dismal fate which finally awaited the parents of Waldegrave, rush at once on the mind of the old man, and extort a pathetic lamentation. The deportment of the Indian warrior forms an admirable contrast to Albert's indulgence of grief, and the stanzas in which it is described rank among the finest in the poem.

"He said—and strain'd unto his heart the boy:
Far differently the mute Oneyda took
His calumet of peace, and cup of joy;
As monumental bronze unchanged his look:
A soul that pity touch'd, but never shook:
Train'd, from his tree-rock'd cradle to his bier,
The fierce extremes of good and ill to brook
Impassive—fearing but the shame of fear—
A stoic of the woods—a man without a tear.—

"Yet deem not goodness on the savage stock
Of Outalissi's heart disdain'd to grow;
As lives the oak unwither'd on the rock
By storms above, and barrenness below:
He scorn'd his own, who felt another's wo:
And ere the wolf-skin on his back he flung,
Or laced his mocasins in act to go,
A song of parting to the boy he sung,
Who slept on Albert's couch, nor heard his friendly tongue."

After a lyrical effusion addressed to the slumbering boy, his "own adopted one," the savage returns to his deserts. His capacity tracking his way through the wilderness by a species of instinct, or rather by the habit of observing the

most minute signs derived from the face of earth or heaven, is described in nervous and striking poetry, and closes the first part of the poem.

Part II opens with a description of Albert's abode, situated between two woods near a river, which, after dashing over a thundering cascade, chose that spot to expand itself into a quiet and pellucid sheet of living water. Beautiful in itself, the scene was graced by the presence of Gertrude, yet more beautiful, an "enthusiast of the woods," alive to all the charms of the romantic scenery by which she was surrounded, and whose sentimental benevolence extended itself even to England, which she knew only by her father's report. And here commences the great defect of the story. We totally lose sight of the orphan Waldegrave, whose arrival makes the only incident in the first canto, and of whose departure from Wyoming we have not been apprised. Neither are we in the least prepared to anticipate such an event, excepting by a line in which Julia expresses a hope that her orphan would be conveyed to "England's shore"—an innuendo which really escaped us in the first, and even in the second, perusal of the poem, and which at any rate, by no means implies that her wish was actually fulfilled. The unaccountable disappearance of this character, to whom we had naturally assigned an important part in the narrative, is not less extraordinary than that Gertrude, in extending her kind wishes and affectionate thoughts towards friends in Britain whom she never knew, and only loved because they might possibly possess

"Her mother's looks—perhaps her likeness strong,"

omits all mention or recollection of the interesting little orphan of whom every reader has destined her the bride from the first moment of his introduction. Of him, however, nothing is said, and we are left to conjecture whether he has gone to Britain and been forgotten by his youthful playfellow, or whether he remains an unnoticed and undistinguished inmate of her father's mansion. We have next a splendid, though somewhat confused, description of a "deep untrodden grot," where, as it is beautifully expressed,—

——————————— "rocks sublime
To human art a sportive semblance wore;
And yellow lichens coloured all the clime,
Like moonlight battlements and towers decay'd by time."

To this grotto, embosomed in all the splendid luxuriance of transatlantic vegetation, Gertrude was wont to retire "with Shakspeare's self to speak and smile alone," and here she is surprised by the arrival of a youth in a Spanish garb, leading in his hand his steed, who is abruptly announced as

"The stranger guest of many a distant land."

We were at least as much startled as Gertrude by this unexpected intruder, and are compelled to acknowledge that the suspense in which we were kept for a few stanzas is rather puzzling than pleasing. We became sensible that we had somehow lost the thread of the story, and while hurriedly endeavouring to recover it, became necessarily insensible to the beauties of the poetry. The stranger enquires for the mansion of Albert,—is of course hospitably received, and tells of the wonders which he had seen in Switzerland, in France, in Italy, and in California, whence he last arrived. At length Albert inquires after the orphan Waldegrave, who (as his question for the first time apprises the reader) had been sent to his relations in England at the age of twelve, after three years' residence in the earthly paradise of Wyoming. The quick eye of Gertrude discovers the mysterious stranger to be "Waldegraves's self of Waldegrave come to tell," and all is rapturous recognition. And here, amidst many beauties, we are again pressed by the leading error of the narrative, for this same Waldegrave—who, for no purpose that we can learn, has been wandering over half the world—of whom the reader knows so little, who appears to have been entirely forgotten during the space of one third of the poem, and whom even Gertrude did not think worthy of commemoration in orisons which called for blessings on friends she had never known—this same Waldegrave, of whose infantine affection for Gertrude we nowhere receive the slightest hint, with even more than the composure of a fine gentleman returned from the grand tour, coolly assures her and Albert at their first interview, that she "shall be his own with all her truth and charms." This extraordinary and unceremonious appropriation is submitted to by Gertrude and her farther with the most unresisting and astonishing complacency. It is in vain to bid us suppose that a tender and interesting attachment had united this youthful couple during Waldegrave's residence at Wyo-

ming. This is like the reference of Bayes to a conversation held by his personages behind the scenes; it is requiring the reader to guess what the author has not told him, and consequently what he is not obliged to know. This inherent defect in the narrative might have been supplied at the expense of two or three stanzas descriptive of the growing attachment between the children, and apprising us of Waldegrave's departure for England. The omission is the more provoking, as we are satisfied of Mr. Campbell's powers to trace the progress of their infant love, and the train of little incidents and employments which gave it opportunity to grow with their growth, and strengthen with their strength; in short, to rival the exquisite picture of juvenile affection presented in Thalaba.

But to proceed with our tale. Gertrude and Waldegrave are united, and spend three short months in all the luxury of mutual and innocent love described in the concluding stanza of part second.

"Then would that home admit them—happier far
Than grandeur's most magnificent saloon—
While, here and there, a solitary star
Flush'd in the dark'ning firmament of June;
And silence brought the soul-felt hour, full soon,
Ineffable, which I may not pourtray;
For never did the Hymenial moon
A paradise of hearts more sacred sway,
In all that slept beneath her soft voluptuous ray."

The third part continues this delightful picture so true in itself, where pure affection and regulated desires combine to form connubial bliss; and we feel all that the poet would impress upon us when in the fifth stanza he announces the storm, which, in the wreck of nations, was to involve this little structure of home-built happiness; and describes the transitory nature of human felicity in the most beautiful and original simile which we have yet found applied to a theme so often sung.

"And in the visions of romantic youth,
What years of endless bliss are yet to flow!
But mortal pleasure, what art thou in truth!
The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below!
And must I change my song? and must I show,
Sweet Wyoming! the day when thou wert doom'd,
Guiltless, to mourn thy loveliest bowers laid low!
When where of yesterday a garden bloom'd,
Death overspread his pall, and black'ning ashes gloom'd."

The approach of civil war in America, and the attachment of Waldegrave to the provincial cause, are briefly touched upon, as are the boding apprehensions of Gertrude, too soon to be fatally realized. One evening, while danger was yet deemed remote, an Indian, worn with fatigue and age, rushes hastily into Albert's cottage, and is with difficulty recognised to be the Oneyda chief Outalissi, who had guided Waldegrave to Wyoming. After an indulgence of former recollections, rather too long to be altogether consistent with the pressing nature of his errand, the Indian informs the domestic circle that the savages, led by Brandt, had extirpated his whole tribe on account of their friendship to the Americans, and were approaching to wreak their vengeance by laying waste the settlement of Wyoming.

"Scarce had he utterred—when Heaven's verge extreme
Reverberates the bomb's descending star,—
And sounds that mingled laugh,—and shout,—and scream,
To freeze the blood, in one discordant jar,
Rung to the pealing thunderbolts of war.
Whoop after whoop with rack the ear assail'd,
As if unearthly fiends had burst their bar;
While rapidly the marksman's shot prevail'd;
And aye, as if for death, some lonely trumpet wail'd.—

"Then look'd they to the hills, where fire o'erhung
The bandit groups, in one Vesuvian glare;
Or swept, far seen, the tower, whose clock, unrung,
Told legible that midnight of despair."

These sounds of tumult and desolation are mingled with the more cheering notes of the drums and military music of a body of provincialists, who arrive, it would seem, to protect the inhabitants of Wyoming. The description of this band, composed of the descendants of various climes, and arrayed by "torch and trumpet," evinces the same high tone of military poetry which glows through the stanzas on the battle of Hohenlinden. We are, however, again compelled to own some disappointment, arising from the indistinctness of the narrative. The provincialists appear prepared to fight in defence of the Pennsylvanian Arcadia. Outalissi chants his battle-song, and Albert invokes, amid the blaze of neighbouring villages, the protection of the God of Hosts on the defenders of their native country; Waldegrave, too, assumes the sword and plume; yet, without any reason assigned, these preparations for battle terminate in a

retreat to a neighbouring fort, and we are left to conjecture the motive for flight in a band so energetic, and so amply provided. The destruction, too, of Wyoming might have claimed a more lengthened detail than is afforded by the lines which we have quoted, and the main interest in the fate of Albert and his family would have been increased rather than diminished, by a glance at those numerous groups who must necessarily have accompanied the flight, or remained to perish with their dwellings. But of these we learn no more than if Waldegrave and Julia had, like our first parents, been the sole inhabitants of this terrestrial paradise. Covered by the friendly battalion, they reach in safety the fort which was to afford them shelter; and in the few accurate yet beautiful lines which characterize its situation and appearance, the poet has happily compelled into his service even the terms of modern fortification, and evinced a complete conquest over those technical expressions, which probably any other bard would have avoided, as fit only for the disciples of Cohorn or Vauban.

"Past was the flight, and welcome seem'd the tower,
That, like a giant standard-bearer, frown'd
Defiance on the roving Indian power.
Beneath, each bold and promontory mound
With embrasure emboss'd, and armour crown'd,
And arrowy frize, and wedged ravelin,
Wove like a diadem its tracery round
The lofty summit of that mountain green;
Here stood secure the group, and eyed a distant scene."

Here, while surveying in fancied security the progress of the devastation, Albert and Gertrude fall, pierced by the bullets of the lurking marksmen of the enemy. A death-speech, affecting, yet somewhat too long, exhausts the last efforts of the expiring Gertrude; and, as her husband kneels by the bodies in ineffable despair, the following exquisite description of Outalissi's sympathy gives an originality and wildness to the scene of wo at once appropriate to America and distinct from the manners of every other country:

"Then mournfully the parting bugle bid
Its farewell o'er the grave of worth and truth:
Prone to the dust afflicted Waldegrave hid
His face on earth;—him watch'd in gloomy ruth,
His woodland guide; but words had none to soothe

The grief that knew not consolation's name;
Casting his Indian mantle o'er the youth,
He watch'd, beneath its folds, each burst that came
Convulsive, ague-like, across his shuddering frame!"

We have gazed with delight on the savage witnessing the death of Wolfe, with awe and sorrow acting upon habits of stubborn apathy; and we have perused the striking passage in Spenser, whose Talus,

"An iron man ymade in iron mould,"

is described as having nevertheless an inly feeling of sympathy with the anguish of Britomarte; yet neither the painter nor the poet has, in our apprehension, presented so perfect and powerful an image of sympathetic sorrow, in a heart unwont to receive such a guest, as appears in the mute distress of the Oneyda warrior, bending over his despairing foster-son. His grief at length becomes vocal in a death-song; which, did our limits permit, we would willingly transfer to these pages. But we have been so profuse in quotation, that the concluding stanzas are all we can produce, to justify our asserting for the author the pre-eminent merit of his lyrical poetry.

"To-morrow let us do or die!*
But when the bolt of death is hurl'd,
Ah! whither then with thee to fly,
Shall Outalissi roam the world?
Seek we thy once-lov'd home?—
The hand is gone that cropt its flowers!
Unheard their clock repeats its hours!
Cold is the hearth within their bow'rs!–
And should we thither roam,
Its echoes, and its empty tread,
Would sound like voices from the dead!

"Or shall we cross yon mountains blue,
Whose streams my kindred nation quaff'd;
And by my side, in battle true,
A thousand warriors drew the shaft?
Ah! there in desolation cold,
The desert serpent dwells alone,
Where grass o'ergrows each mould'ring bone,

* This expression occurs in Burns's Bannockburn; yet it is a kind of common property, being the motto, we believe, of a Scottish family. We might more justly, on the part of the ingenious Dr. Leyden, reclaim the line

"Red is the cup they drink, but not with wine."

But these occasional coincidences, over which stupidity delights to doze, are hardly worth noticing in criticising original poetry.

And stones themselves to ruin grown,
Like me, are death-like old.
Then seek we not their camp—for there—
The silence dwells of my despair!

"But hark, the trump!—to-morrow thou
In glory's fires shalt dry thy tears:
Ev'n from the land of shadows now
My father's awful ghost appears;
Amidst the clouds that round us roll,
He bids my soul for battle thirst—
He bids me dry the last—the first—
The only tears that ever burst—
From Outalissi's soul;—
Because I may not stain with grief
The death-song of an Indian chief."

With these stanzas the curtain is dropped over the dead and the mourners, and the poem is concluded.

Before we proceed to any general examination of *Gertrude of Wyoming*, we think it necessary to intimate to our readers, that it is by no means owing to deficiency of wit, on our own part, that we have conducted them in sober sadness from the beginning to the end of Mr. Campbell's affecting tale. We are perfectly aware, that, according to the modern canons of criticism, the reviewer is expected to show his immense superiority to the author reviewed, and, at the same time, to relieve the tediousness of narration, by turning the epic, dramatic, moral story before him into quaint and lively burlesque. We had accordingly prepared materials for caricaturing *Gertrude of Wyoming*, in which the irresistible Spanish pantaloons of her lover were not forgotten—Albert was regularly distinguished as old Jonathan—the provincial troops were called Yankie-doodles, and the sombre character of the Oneyda chief was relieved by various sly allusions to "blankets, strouds, stinkŭbus, and wampum;" and having thus clearly demonstrated to Mr. Campbell and to the reader, that the whole effect of his poem was as completely at our mercy as the house which a child has painfully built with a pack of cards, we proposed to pat him on the head with a few slight compliments on the ingenuity of his puny architecture, and dismiss him with a sugar-plum, as a very promising child indeed. But however prepared we came to *quiz* what is no otherwise ridiculous than because serious and pathetic, our hearts recoiled from the disingenuousness of the task. We shall ever be found ready to apply the

lash of ridicule to conceit, presumption, or dulness; but no temptation to display our own wit, or to conciliate popularity, shall prompt us to expose genius to the malignant grin of envious folly, or, by low and vulgar parody, to derogate from a work which we might strive in vain to emulate.

We return from this digressive apology to the merits and defects of Gertrude of Wyoming, which have this marked singularity, that the latter intrude upon us at the very first reading, whereas, after repeated perusals, we perceive beauties which had previously escaped our notice. We have indeed rather paradoxically been induced to ascribe the most obvious faults to the same cause which has undoubtedly produced many of the excellencies of the poem,—to the anxious and assiduous attention, which the author has evidently bestowed upon it before publication. It might be expected that the public would regard with indulgence those imperfections which arise from the poet's diffidence of his own splendid powers, and too great deference to the voice of criticism. In some respects, however, public taste, like a fine lady, "stoops to the forward and the bold;" and the modest and anxious adventurer is defrauded of the palm, merely that his judges may enjoy the childish superiority of condemning an over-laboured attempt to give them pleasure. Let no reader suppose that we recommend to imitation the indiscreet and undaunted precipitation with which another popular poet is said to throw his effusions before the public with the indifference of an ostrich as to their success or failure. To sober criticism the fault of him who will not do his best is greater than the excess of over caution, as the sin of presumption is greater than that of spiritual despondency. Carelessness is also a crime of deeper dye when considered with reference to its effects upon public taste; for the habit of writing loosely is particularly captivating to the fry of young scribblers, and we are in danger of being deluged with rhapsodical romances by poets who would shrink from the attempt of imitating the condensed, polished, and laboured stanzas of Gertrude of Wyoming. But considered with reference not to the ultimate reputation, but to the immediate popularity of the author, it is dangerous to allow the public to suppose that they have before them the work upon which, after the most solicitous and

anxious exertion, he is willing to stake his poetical character. A spirit of contradiction, which animates the mass of mankind, impels them to depreciate that which is presented as the *chef d'œuvre* of the artist; and the question is no longer whether the work be excellent, but whether it has attained that summit of excellence on which no poet ever was or ever will be placed by his contemporaries.

We have hitherto only considered the labour bestowed upon *Gertrude of Wyoming* as an impediment to the flow of popularity which has in the present day attended poems of a ruder structure. But the public taste, although guided in some degree by caprice, is also to a certain extent correctly grounded upon critical doctrine; and the truth is, that an author cannot work upon a beautiful poem beyond a certain point, without doing it real and irreparable injury in more respects than one.

It is, in the first place, impossible to make numerous and minute alterations, to alter the position of stanzas, to countermarch and invert the component parts of sentences, without leaving marks of their original array. The epitaph of the Italian Valetudinary will apply as well in poetry as in regimen; and it may be said of many a laboured effort of genius, *Stava bene, ma per star meglio, sto qui.*" There are in *Gertrude* passages of a construction so studiously involved, that nothing but the deepest consideration could have enabled the author to knit the Gordian knot by which his meaning is fettered, and which unfortunately requires similar exertion of intellect ere it can be disentangled. An ordinary reader is sometimes unable and always unwilling to make such an effort, and hence the volume is resigned and condemned in a moment of splenetic impatience. Some of the introductory stanzas have their beauties thus obscured, and afford rather a conjectural than a certain meaning. We allude to the second in particular. Similar indistinctness occurs in the construction of the following sentence:—

> " But high in amphitheatre above
> His arms the everlasting aloe throw:
> *Breathed but an air of heaven,* and all the grove
> Instinct as if with living spirit grew."

The idea here is beautiful, but it is only on reflection that we discover that the words in italics mean not that the aloe breathed an air of heaven, but that the grove grew instinct

with living spirit so soon as the slightest air of heaven breathed on it. Sometimes passages, of which the tone is simple and natural, are defaced by affected inversion, as in Gertrude's exclamation:—

> "Yet say! for friendly hearts from whence we came
> Of us does oft remembrance intervene?"

Again, in altering and retouching, inverting and condensing his stanzas, an author will sometimes halt between his first and his latter meaning, and deviate into defects both of sense and grammar. Thus in the Oneyda's first song we have—

> "Sleep, wearied one! and in the dreaming land
> Shouldst thou the spirit of thy mother greet,
> O say *to-morrow* that the white man's hand
> *Hath plucked* the thorns of sorrow from thy feet."

Lastly, and above all, in the irksome task of repeated revision and reconsideration, the poet loses, if we may use the phrase, the impulse of inspiration; his fancy, at first so ardent, becomes palled and flattened, and no longer excites a correspondent glow of expression. In this state of mind he may correct faults, but he will never add beauties; and so much do we prefer the stamp of originality to tame correctness, that were there not a medium which ought to be aimed at, we would rather take *prima cura*, with all its beauties, than the over-amended edition in which both are obliterated. Let any one read the most sublime passage in Shakspeare an hundred times over without intermission, it will at length convey to the tired ear neither pathos nor sublimity, hardly even an intelligible idea. Something analogous to this occurs to every poet in the melancholy task of correction. The Scythians, who debated their national affairs first in the revel of a festival, and afterwards during a day of fasting, could hardly experience a greater sinking of spirit in their second consultation, than the bard, who, in revising the offspring of moments of enthusiastic feeling, experiences, that

> "The dear illusion will not last,
> The era of enchantment's past."

Then occur the doubtful and damping questions, whether the faded inspiration was genuine—whether the verses corresponded in any degree to its dictates, or have power to

communicate to others a portion of the impulse which produced them? Then comes the dread of malignant criticism; and last, but not least tormenting, the advice of literary friends, each suggesting doubts and alterations, till the spirit is corrected out of the poem, as a sprightly boy is sometimes lectured and flogged, for venial indiscretions, into a stupid and inanimate dunce. The beautiful poem of *Lochiel* which Mr. Campbell has appended to the present volume as if to illustrate our argument, exhibits marks of this injudicious alteration. Let us only take the last lines, where, in the original edition, the champion declares, that even in the moment of general rout and destruction,

> "Though my perishing ranks should be strew'd in their grave,
> Like ocean-weeds heap'd on the surf-beaten shore,
> Lochiel, untainted by flight or by chains,
> While the kindling of life in his bosom remains,
> Shall victor exult, or in death be laid low,
> With his back to the field, and his feet to the foe!
> And leaving in battle no blot on his name,
> Look proudly to heaven from the death-bed of fame."

The whole of this individual, vigorous, and marked picture of the Highland chieftain lying breathless amid his broken and slaughtered clan—a picture so strong, that we even mark the very posture and features of the hero—is humbled and tamed, abridged and corrected, into the following vague and inexpressive couplet:—

> "Lochiel - - - - - - - -
> Shall victor exult in the battle's acclaim,
> Or look to yon heaven from the death-bed of fame."

If the pruning knife has been applied with similar severity to the beauties of *Gertrude of Wyoming*, the hatchet of the Mohawk Brandt himself was not more fatally relentless and indiscriminate in its operations.

The book contains, besides *Gertrude of Wyoming*, several smaller pieces. Two beautiful war odes, entitled *The Mariners of England* and *The Battle of the Baltic*, afford pleasing instances of that short and impetuous lyric sally in which Mr. Campbell excels all his contemporaries. Two ballads, *Glenara* and *Lord Ullin's Daughter*,—the former approaching the rude yet forcible simplicity of the ancient minstrels, the latter upon a more refined plan,—conclude the volume. They are models in their several styles of composition.

THE BATTLES OF TALAVERA.*

[Quarterly Review, November, 1809.]

There is no point in which our age differs more from those which preceded it, than in the apparent apathy of our poets and rhymers to the events which are passing over them. From the days of Marlborough to those of Wolfe and Hawke, the Tower and Park guns were not more certain proclaimers of a victory, than the pens of contemporary bards. St. James's had then its odes, and Grub Street poured forth its ballads upon every fresh theme of national exultation. Some of these productions, being fortunately wedded to popular tunes, have warped themselves so closely with our character, that, to love liberty and roast beef is not more natural to an Englishman, than to beat time to "Steady, boys, Steady," and "Rule Britannia." Our modern authors are of a different cast; some of them roam back to distant and dark ages; others wander to remote countries, instead of seeking a theme in the exploits of a Nelson, an Abercromby, or a Wellesley; others amuse themselves with luscious sonnets to Bessies and Jessies; and all seem so little to regard the crisis in which we are placed, that we cannot help thinking they would keep fiddling their allegros and adagios, even if London were on fire, or Buonaparte landed at Dover.

We are old-fashioned men, and are perhaps inclined to see, in the loss and decay of ancient customs, more than can reasonably be traced from them; to regard, in short, that as a mark of apathy and indifference to national safety and glory, which may only arise from a change in the manner of expressing popular feeling. Be that as it may, we think that

* *The Battles of Talavera. A Poem.* By the Right Hon. J. W. Croker.

the sullen silence observed by our present race of poets, upon all themes of immediate national concern, argues little confidence in their own powers, small trust in the liberal indulgence of the public to extemporaneous compositions, and, above all, a want of that warm interest in such themes as might well render them indifferent to both considerations. Lord Wellington, more fortunate than any contemporary English general, whether we regard the success or the scale of his achievements, has been also unusually distinguished by poetical commemoration; and as his exploits form an exception to the train of evil fortune which has *generally* attended our foreign expeditions, the hearts of those capable of celebrating them seem to have been peculiarly awakened and warmed at the recital. Probably many of our readers have seen the superb Indian war-song which celebrated his conquest over the Mahrattas: beginning

> "Shout, Britain, for the battle of Assay,
> For that was a day
> When we stood in our array,
> Like the lion turn'd to bay,
> And the battle-word was conquer or die!"

We are now happy to find that another bard has advanced with a contribution to adorn the most recent and most glorious wreath won by the same gallant general. The promptitude as well as the patriotism of the tribute might claim indulgence as well as praise; but it is with pleasure we observe that although this volunteer has rushed forward without waiting to arm himself in that panoply which is often, after all, found too slight to repel the assaults of modern criticism, neither his adventurous courage nor the goodness of his cause, is his sole or his principal merit.

The battle of Talavera is written in that irregular Pindaric measure first applied to serious composition by Mr. Walter Scott, and it is doing no injustice to the ingenious author to say, that in many passages, we were, from the similarity of the stanza and of the subject, involuntarily reminded of the battle of Flodden, in the sixth book of Marmion. The feeling, however, went no farther than the perception of that kindred resemblance between those of the same family which is usually most striking at first sight, and becomes less remarkable, and at length invisible, as we increase in intimacy with those in whom it exists. In one

respect the choice of the measure is more judicious on the part of the nameless bard, than on that of Mr. Scott. The latter had a long narrative to compose, and was necessarily forced upon passages in which the looseness and irregularity of his versification has an extravagant and slovenly appearance. It is where the tone of passion is low, that the reader demands a new interest from regularity of versification and beauty of selected diction. On the other hand, in passages of vivid, and especially of tumultuary and hurried description, the force of the poet's thought, and the intenseness of the feeling excited, ought to support his language. He may be then permitted to strip himself as to a combat, and to evince that "brave neglect" of the forms of versification which express an imagination too much exalted, and a mind too much occupied by the subject itself, to regard punctiliously the arrangement of rhymes or the measurement of stanzas. In this point of view, few themes present themselves which can better authorize a daring flight, than that which has been selected by the author of Talavera.

The poem opens with the following stanza, of which the first nine lines are an exquisite picture of repose, and the last somewhat more feebly and prosaically expressed.

" 'Twas dark; from every mountain head
The sunny smile of heaven had fled.
And evening, over hill and dale
Dropt, with the dew, her shadowy veil;
In fabled Tajo's darkening tide
Was quenched the golden ray;
Silent, the silent stream beside,
Three gallant people's hope and pride,
Three gallant armies lay.
Welcome to them the clouds of night,
That close a fierce and hurried fight—
And wearied all, and none elate,
With equal hope and doubt they wait
A fiercer, bloodier day.
France, every nation's foe, is there,
And Albion's sons her red cross bear,
With Spain's young liberty to share,
The fortune of the fray."

The attack of the French is then described with all the peculiar circumstances of uncertainty and horror that aggravate the terrors of midnight conflict. The doubtful and suppressed sounds which announce to the defenders the approach of the assailants; the rush of the former to meet and

anticipate the charge; the reflection on those who fall without witnesses to their valour; and all the "wonders of that gloomy fight," are successfully and artfully introduced to impress the dreadful scene upon the mind of the reader: the following lines have peculiar and picturesque merit.

> "Darkling they fight, and only know
> If chance has sped the fatal blow,
> Or, by the trodden corse below,
> Or by the dying groan:
> Furious they strike without a mark,
> Save now and then the sulphurous spark
> Illumes some visage grim and dark,
> That with the flash is gone!"

In the succeeding stanzas, we have the repose after the action, and the preparation for the general battle of the next day. The anxiety of the British general is described, and a singular coincidence pointed out in the sixth stanza. We shall transcribe it, and "let the stricken deer go weep."

> "Oh heart of honour, soul of fire,
> Even at that moment fierce and dire,
> Thy agony of fame!
> When Britain's fortune dubious hung,
> And France tremendous swept along,
> In tides of blood and flame.
> Even while thy genius and thy arm
> Retrieved the day and turned the storm,
> Even at that moment, factious spite,
> And envious fraud essayed to blight
> The honours of thy name."

The share which is assigned to Lord Wellington in the conduct of the fight, is precisely that which is really the lot of a commander-in-chief. Generals were painted in armour long after

> "—— the fashion of the fight
> Had laid gilt steel and twisted mail aside
> For modern foppery."

And from some similar concatenation of ideas—modern poets, for many a day after the "eagle-glance" and commanding genius of a hero had been the attributes which decided the field, continued to describe him mowing down whole ranks with his sword, as if personal strength were as essential to his success as in the days of the Trojan war. This foolish fashion, which, like every false and unnatural circumstance, tends obviously to destroy the probability of

the scene, has been discarded by good taste ever since the publication of Addison's Campaign. The approach of the Gallic army is beautifully described.

> "And is it now a goodly sight,
> Or dreadful to behold,
> The pomp of that approaching fight,
> Waving ensigns, pennons light,
> And gleaming blades and bayonets bright,
> And Eagles winged with gold;
> And warrior bands of many a hue,
> Scarlet and white and green and blue,
> Like rainbows o'er the morning dew,
> Their various lines unfold:
> While cymbal clang and trumpet strain,
> The knell of battle toll'd;
> And trampling squadrons beat the plain,
> 'Till the clouds echoed back again,
> As if the thunder rolled."

Our bounds will not permit us to quote the opening of the battle, though it contains some passages of great merit. Realizing his narrative with an art, which has been thought almost irreconcilable with poetry, the author next undertakes to give us a distinct idea of those manœuvres and movements upon which the success of the day depended; and by clothing them with the striking circumstances which hide the otherwise technical and somewhat familiar detail of the Gazette, he has succeeded at once in preserving the form and leading circumstances, and "all the current of the heady fight;" and, generally speaking, in presenting them to the fancy in a manner as poetical as they are clear to the understanding. In treading, however, upon a line so very narrow, he has sometimes glided into bombast on the one hand, or into flat, bald, and vulgar expression upon the other. Although, for instance, the word "*firelocks*," be used technically, and somewhat pedantically, to express the men who bear them, we cannot permit a poet to speak with impunity of

> "Full fifty thousand *muskets bright*
> *Led* by old warriors trained to fight."

Spears, we know, is used for *spearmen*; but this is a license sanctioned by antiquity, and not to be extended to modern implements of war. In other places, the ardour of the poet is expressed in language too turgid and inflated. But the following stanza may safely be quoted as avoiding, under

very difficult circumstances, the extremes of simplicity and bombast; and describing the celebrated charge of the British cavalry with a spirit worthy of those whose gallantry was so memorable on that memorable day.

"Three columns of the flower of France,
With rapid step and firm, advance,
At first through tangled ground,
O'er fence and dell and deep ravine—
At length they reach the level green,
The midnight battle's murderous scene,
The valley's eastern bound.
There in a rapid line they form,
Thence are just rushing to the storm,
By bold Belluno led.
When sudden thunders shake the vale,
Day seems, as in eclipse, to fail,
The light of heaven is fled.
A dusty whirlwind rides the sky,
A living tempest rushes by
With deafening clang and tread—
'A charge, a charge,' the British cry,
'And Seymour at its head.'"

The miscarriage of this gallant body of cavalry amid the broken ground in which the French again formed their column, its causes and consequences, the main battle itself, and all its alternations of success, are described in the same glowing and vivid language; which we will venture to say is not that of one who writes with a view to his own distinction as a poet, but who feels that living fire glow within him which impels him to fling into verse his animated and enthusiastic feelings of exultation on contemplating such a subject as the battle of Talavera. The following description of a circumstance new to the terrors of battle, we shall insert, ere we take our leave of Talavera.

"But shooting high and rolling far,
What new and horrid face of war
Now flushes on the sight?
'Tis France as furious she retires,
That wreaks in desolating fires,
The vengeance of her flight.
The flames the grassy vale o'errun,
Already parch'd by summer's sun;
And sweeping turbid down the breeze
In clouds the arid thickets sieze,
And climb the dry and withered trees
In flashes long and bright.
Oh! 'twas a scene sublime and dire,
To see that billowy sea of fire,

Rolling its fierce and flaky flood,
O'er cultured field and tangled wood,
And drowning in the flaming tide,
Autumn's hope and summer's pride.
From Talavera's wall and tower
And from the mountain's height,
Where they had stood for many an hour,
To view the varying fight,
Burghers and peasants in amaze
Behold their groves and vineyards blaze!
Trembling they viewed the bloody fray,
But little thought, ere close of day,
That England's sigh and France's groan
Should be re-echoed by their own!
But ah! far other cries than these—
Are wafted on the dismal breeze—
Groans, not the wounded's lingering groan—
Shrieks, not the shriek of death alone—
But groan and shriek and horrid yell
Of terror, torture, and despair,
Such as 'twould freeze the tongue to tell,
And chill the heart to hear,
When to the very field of fight,
Dreadful alike in sound and sight,
The conflagration spread,
Involving in the fiery wave,
The brave and reliques of the brave—
The dying and the dead!"

We have shunned, in the present instance, the unpleasant task of pointing out, and dwelling upon individual inaccuracies. There are several hasty expressions, flat lines, and deficient rhymes, which prove to us little more than that the composition was a hurried one. These, in a poem of a different description, we should have thought it our duty to point out to the notice of the author. But, after all, it is the spirit of a poet that we consider as demanding our chief attention; and upon its ardour or rapidity must finally hinge our applause or condemnation. We care as little (comparatively that is to say) for the minor arts of composition and versification as Falstaff did for the thews and sinews, and outward composition of his recruits. It is "*the heart, the heart*," that makes the poet as well as the soldier; and while we shall not withhold some applause even from the ordinary statuary who executes a common figure, our wreath must be reserved for the Prometheus who shall impregnate his statue with fire from heaven.

SOUTHEY'S CURSE OF KEHAMA.*

[Quarterly Review, February, 1811.]

Ever since the revival of letters, the learned world has been agitated by dissensions between two of its most distinguished classes, the poets and the critics, and each has in its turn made a plausible appeal to the public. The poets have urged, and with much appearance of justice, that their peculiar talent being of a nature singularly capricious and evanescent, it is not in the power even of the possessors to prescribe its exertions. That for this reason it has almost in every language borne a name implying inspiration, as if poetry were less the work of the author in his ordinary and imperturbed state of mind, than the effusion of a moment of enthusiasm, when the ideas are sublimed, and the imagination kindled by an impulse which he can neither guide nor withstand. They have proceeded in pathetic strains to state the hardship of a profession in which their exertions, if successful, are uniformly dogged by calumny, and, if otherwise, by contempt and disgrace. It is but fair, they allege, that in so disadvantageous a combat they should he allowed to choose their own ground, to make such experiments upon the public taste, and the principles of their own art, as change of times appears to demand; and that it is the height of injustice to confine their efforts to the subjects chosen by their predecessors, which have now lost the gloss of novelty, and are become in a manner exhausted. They contend that themselves alone can be judges of the force and faculties of their own mind, and consequently of the most advantageous mode of employing their powers; and that urging them to a style of composition, which, however excellent in itself, is alien from their temper and studies, is as absurd as to compel David to use the armour which he had not proved, instead

* *The Curse of Kehama.* By Robert Southey. London: 1810.

of his own pastoral stone and sling. The object of poetry is pleasure; and if the old track has ceased to guide us towards it, fresh avenues must be opened. Nay, conceding that the style of their predecessors is more pure and excellent than their own, modern authors still plead that, like a popular melody "which the carmen whistle," it has in some degree lost its effect by repeated and dull imitation. Let us, say they, yield to the usual revolutions of taste, and indulge the public with some variety in poetical composition. Those who succeed us, more fortunate than ourselves, may again resort to the imitation of purer models, and their efforts will not only have the renewed grace of novelty, but all the advantages which can be gained by a contrast with our own.

The critics are not without their answers to these charges. They plead that poetry, like all the other fine arts, has its general rules, which, though strictly observed, will still leave endless scope for variety. That as the musician consents that his notes shall be arranged by the general laws of harmony, it does not become the poet to assume the license of framing his effusions according to the fantastic dictates of his own imagination. If, in a long succession of ages, the legitimate subjects of verse lose the charm of absolute novelty, the loss had better be supplied by an attempt to throw over them a polish and a grace to which the ancient models were strangers, than by capricious excursions into the realms of fancy. The form of a Grecian temple, they say, no longer boasts to our eyes the charm of novelty; yet that is no reason for supplying its place by the grotesque and puerile singularities of a Chinese pagoda. The plea of hardship they refute by an appeal to the experience of every other profession, where long study and early apprenticeship are as indispensable to success as genius and talent. To the personal objection against their judgment, they reply that the poet is seldom the best judge of his own compositions, or the most impartial arbiter of those of others; that in the glow of enthusiastic feeling he is apt to misuse his own talents and mislead the public taste; and that in all nations there has arisen, with the general diffusion of literature, a separate class of men neither professing to be poets themselves, nor to read poetry upon the usual motives of interest and amusement, but for the sake of justice to the dead and candour to the living, to mark the progress of the art itself, to correct

the exuberances of its professors, to point out their excellences, to whisper to them the advice which they can never collect from the thunder of applause.

Amid these contending pretensions, it appears to us that the critic rests too much upon usage and authority, and that the poet allows too little to the general principles of taste. The former would tie down an author to the rules of Scaliger and Bossu, the latter claims an indemnity from all critical regulation whatever. It requires little acquaintance with poetry to know how few good epics have appeared; and we fear that of those which retain the greatest share of popularity, very few will be found to be written by poets who have left the beaten track, and endeavoured to produce something new and original. The ingenuity of critics has been strained to discover common rules, which should at once apply to the *Iliad* and *Paradise Lost;* but whoever will fairly take a view of the subject, must be satisfied that although the talents of the two authors did in many material points resemble each other, yet the nature of their themes, the object of their poetry, the rules upon which it is conducted, differ as widely as possible; and if they had not both been called epic poets, scarcely another point of resemblance would be found between them. Virgil, it is true, has followed Homer more closely, reducing, however, to line and measure the exuberances of his model, and thus presenting the graces of regularity instead of the bold front of originality. But, although this attempt was crowned with success, and was in fact rather the introduction of a new species of writing, grounded upon the Grecian epic, than a strict imitation of Homer, the various bards who attempted to follow in the same path have been less fortunate.—Tasso, indeed, is an exception; but they who read him attentively will find they owe much of their pleasure to those passages in which the Æneid and Iliad are withdrawn from our recollection. The beautiful episode of Arminia is an incident of a pastoral nature, and the adventure of the enchanted forest a chapter in a metrical romance. To most Italians, and indeed to many other readers of poetry, Ariosto is more pleasing than Tasso; which certainly can only arise from the fatiguing corollary which the *Jerusalem Delivered* forms to the siege of Troy. Of later writers it is needless and would be invidious to speak. They load our shelves indeed, and are recorded in our cata-

logues; but who can say that the learned labours of Bossu, so admirably ridiculed by Pope, have added one readable poem to the literature of France or England? The harp of Mincio has made miserable music in the hands of Voltaire, Blackmore, and later worthies; and we may well use the expostulation of a living poet,—

> "Must sleepy bards the flattering dream prolong,
> Mechanic echoes of the Mantuan song,
> From truth and nature shall we widely stray,
> Where Virgil not where fancy leads the way?"

Here, therefore, is one road to the temple of fame, not indeed blockaded, but broken up and rendered impassable by the numbers who have trodden it. Similar changes have happened in other professions; and as popularity is at present sought by varying from the classic subjects of the ancients, by describing Gothic castles, modern cottages, and as we shall presently see, Indian pagodas, so the painter who can no longer succeed by imitations of Raphael and Guido, gains the public applause by groups of peasants, fishers, and smugglers. This may cost the antiquary a sigh, and draw from the critic a stern rebuke; but, after all, it is but a specimen of the eternal operation of change, to which literature, like the globe itself, is necessarily subjected.

> "What man that sees the ever-whirling wheel
> Of change, the which all mortal things doth sway,
> But that thereby doth find and plainly feel
> How mutability in them doth play
> Her cruel sports to many men's decay?"

There are, however, as the same poet proceeds to inform us, laws by which mutability herself is regulated in her various and capricious movements, and which, therefore, may supply the critic with a code independent of her influence. Such laws, indeed, are to be drawn, not from the mechanical jargon of French criticism, but from an accurate consideration of the springs and movements of the human heart. These doubtless are changed and modified in the different stages of society, as the outward figure is disguised or altered by the progressive change of dress. But the nature of the human mind in the one case, as the conformation of the limbs in the other, remains in fact unaltered; and, making allowance always for the particular stage

of society, it is that to which we must finally appeal in censuring or approving poetical composition. The writings of the ancients may be then properly consulted, not as containing the authority by which their successors must be regulated, but as affording the happiest illustration of those general principles upon which poetry ought to be written. We can only slightly glance at this subject at present; but should we ever recur to it, it may not be difficult to prove, that the elder critics, in their pedantic veneration for the ancients, totally overlooked the real advantage to be derived from studying them, and thus, to speak the language of the schools, confounding the accidental and formal qualities with those which were essential to their poetry—drew the canons of criticism from the former instead of resorting to the latter, which it is no easy matter to analyze and define. Hence it has been laid down as a rule, that a modern should imitate Homer and Virgil in the subject, incident, and conduct of the story; instead of requiring him to emulate their spirit, upon a theme adapted to his own times, studies, and peculiar bent of genius.

We have been unavoidably led into this general line of reflection by the volume before us. The verses prefixed announce a determination in the author to step out of the common road of composition, and to put himself upon his country for the issue of his trespass, if there be one.

> "For I will for no man's pleasure,
> Change a syllable or measure.
> Pedants shall not tie my strains
> To our antique poets' veins;
> Being born as free as these,
> I will sing as I shall please."

This bold avowal is followed by a narrative poem, in twenty-four sections, of a nature powerfully interesting, and at the same time the most wild and uncommon which has hitherto fallen under our observation. The story is founded upon the Hindoo mythology, the most gigantic, cumbrous, and extravagant system of idolatry to which temples were ever erected. The scene is alternately laid in the terrestrial paradise, under the sea—in the heaven of heavens—and in hell itself. The principal actors are a man who approaches almost to omnipotence; another labouring under a strange and fearful malediction, which exempts him from

the ordinary laws of nature; a good genius, a sorceress, and a ghost, with several Hindostan deities of different ranks. The only being that retains the usual attributes of humanity is a female, who is gifted with immortality at the close of the piece. That nothing in this extraordinary poem might resemble what had been written before, the measure is of a kind absolutely new in narrative poetry. It resembles that of *Thalaba* in structure; but being in rhyme, although the coincidences are of irregular occurrence, it may best be compared to the pindarics of Donne and Cowley; a measure which, if it sometimes disappoints the ear, does at others unexpectedly form the happiest and most beautiful combinations of harmony, and is, upon the whole, by its very wildness, excellently suited to the strange and irregular magnificence of the descriptions which it is employed to convey.—But we hasten to give a sketch of the story.

It is necessary, first, to notice a peculiarity of the Hindoo religion, upon which Mr. Southey has founded his poem. It is thus described in the preface:—

"Prayers, penances, and sacrifices, are supposed to possess an inherent and actual value, in no degree depending upon the disposition or motive of the person who performs them. They are drafts upon heaven, for which the gods cannot refuse payment. The worst men, bent upon the worst designs, have in this manner obtained power which has made them formidable to the supreme deities themselves, and rendered an *Avatar*, or incarnation of Vishnoo the Preserver, necessary."—*Pref.* pp. vii, viii.

The reader, then, is to suppose that Kehama, a mighty rajah, had, by a course of austere penances and extraordinary sacrifices, extorted from the deities of Hindostan a power which upon earth was already equal to their own. Neither did he therefore cease his devotions, which although offered with the worst and most malignant designs, and accepted by the deities with reluctance and terror, did nevertheless authorize him to claim from them still farther accessions of power. The gods, who observed that he continued by new austerities and sacrifices to make daily encroachments on their prerogatives, anticipated with growing alarm the period of their final subjection to this inexorable aspirant. The dreaded moment seemed not far remote; for Kehama, having already acquired full power over the earth, was engaged in a series of mysterious sacrifices, the consummation of which would, by the conquest of Indra, subject the Swerga (the

heaven of our earthly system), together with all its tenantry of gods, to his authority.—His next object of ambition is to be the conquest of the regions of Padalon, the Hindoo Tartarus, where the Amreeta or drink of immortality was deposited; when he shall have possessed himself of this divine liquor, it will only remain that he should scale the empyreum, and struggle for the full power of divinity with Bramah, Vishnoo, and Seeva—the Trimourtee of the Bramins. But though thus elevated in present power, and yet more by future prospect above the lot of humanity, this mighty being was not yet exempted from the evils which attend it. Arvalan, his only son, whom he had secured from steel and fire, was slain with a stake by a peasant whose daughter he was attempting to violate. The poem opens with the following rich and brilliant description of the young rajah's funeral rites.

"Midnight, and yet no eye
Through all the Imperial City clos'd in sleep!
Behold her streets a-blaze
With light that seems to kindle the red sky,
Her myriads swarming through the crowded ways!
Master and slave, old age and infancy,
All, all abroad to gaze;
House-top and balcony
Clustered with women, who throw back their veils,
With unimpeded and insatiate sight
To view the funeral pomp which passes by,
As if the mournful rite
Were but to them a scene of joyance and delight.
Vainly, ye blessed twinklers of the night,
Your feeble beams ye shed,
Quench'd in the unnatural light which might out-stare
Even the broad eye of day;
And thou from thy celestial way
Pourest, O Moon, an ineffectual ray!
For lo! ten thousand torches flame and flare
Upon the midnight air,
Blotting the lights of heaven
With one protentous glare.
Behold the fragrant smoke in many a fold,
Ascending floats along the fiery sky,
And hangeth visible on high,
A dark and waving canopy!
Hark! 'tis the funeral trumpet's breath!
'Tis the dirge of death!
At once ten thousand drums begin
With one long thunder-peal the ear assailing;
Ten thousand voices then join in,
And with one deep and general din

Pour their wild wailing.
The song of praise is drown'd
Amid that deafening sound;
You hear no more the trumpet's tone,
You hear no more the mourner's moan,
Though the trumpet's breath, and the dirge of death,
Mingle and swell the funeral yell.
But rising over all in one acclaim
Is heard the echoed and re-echoed name,
From all that countless rout:
Arvalan! Arvalan!
Arvalan! Arvalan!
Ten times ten thousand voices in one shout
Call Arvalan! The overpowering sound
From house to house repeated rings about,
From tower to tower rolls round."

With equally glowing colours the author proceeds to describe the procession of the Bramins, and the appearance of the wives of Arvalan, who are doomed to share with him the funeral pile.—Their respective demeanour is marked with the masterly hand of genius, that loves to contrast the effects of the same fate upon different dispositions. Azla calmly takes her seat, while "young Nealliny" loudly invokes the compassion of the attendants, until she is bound by force to the dead body of her husband. The pile is fired with a solemnity at once awful and pathetic, by the hand Kehama himself, amid the noise of a thousand instruments of music, and the shouts of the immense multitude, which drown the cries of the living victims. When all is in one mass of flame, Kehama, moving towards the table of the dead, evokes the spirit of his slaughtered son. He appears, and a scene of recrimination takes place, in which they mutually reproach each other. At length Arvalan, after being endowed with all the attributes of which his spirit could be made participant, demands the farther boon of exemplary and lasting vengeance. Kehama then turns again to the pile, raises his hand to command silence, and orders the peasant and his daughter, who had been dragged in the train of the funeral procession, to be brought forth. Kailyal, the female, flies for aid to a rude image of Marriataly, the protecting goddess of the poor, which stood on the banks of the Ganges, where the funeral rites were performed. A thousand hands strive to tear her from the sanctuary, but the offended deity at once displaces her idol, and plunges it with the suppliant maiden and the sacrilegious violators of her

rights, into the broad and rapid torrent below. Kehama, nothing moved, turns the whole of his wrath against the father Ladurlad, upon whom he pronounces the doom which gives name to the poem. The pause which precedes his revenge is horribly sublime, as well as the curse itself.

"I charm thy life
From the weapons of strife,
From stone and from wood,
From fire and from flood,
From the serpent's tooth,
And the beasts of blood:
From Sickness I charm thee,
And Time shall not harm thee,
But Earth which is mine,
Its fruits shall deny thee;
And Water shall hear me,
And know thee and fly thee;
And the winds shall not touch thee,
When they pass by thee:
And the Dews shall not wet thee,
When they fall nigh thee:
And thou shalt seek Death
To release thee, in vain;
Thou shalt live in thy pain,
While Kehama shall reign,
With a fire in thy heart,
And a fire in thy brain;
And Sleep shall obey me,
And visit thee never,
And the Curse shall be on thee
For ever and ever."

Under this anathema Ladurlad stands motionless, hearing the sounds which formerly rang in his ear, seeing the multitude dispersing, and the funeral solemnity almost concluded, yet feeling that his dreadful fate had already begun to operate. Devoted to inexpressible bodily torture, and deprived not only of hope during life, but of death itself, he staggers wildly from the spot, and losing sight of the decaying fires and the bands of priests and soldiers which surrounded them, he moves, in solitary contemplation of his misery, along the banks of the river. Here he spies an object borne down by the current,—it is the image of Marriataly, to which his daughter still clings. Full of hope and joy he dashes into the waters, which obeyed Kehama, and retreated before him.—Blind to the miracle, he only thinks of Kailyal, and drags her to shore, where the sad developement of their lot

forms the subject of some beautiful stanzas, replete '
poetry and natural and affectionate feeling.

Repeated trials convince Ladurlad of the sad realit
his curse. The water avoids his hand—the wind, w
waves every leaf around him, is unfelt; sleep will doub
know the Rajah's spell, and fly from his victim—even
grave, the last refuge of the wretched, is denied. Wan
ing yet farther into the forest, Kailyal and her father re
near a tiger's haunt. The scene which follows is as im
sive and affecting as the subject is wild and extraordin
Ladurlad, for his daughter's sake, silently mans himse
endure the raging pain which attended his singular des
while Kailyal almost persuades herself, from the regul
of his breathing, that heaven had lent some respite t
sorrow, and in this hope sinks to rest. Ladurlad, who
awake, and felt the whole effects of the curse, now reso
to withdraw from his daughter, and save her the sig
his misery. He had hardly executed his purpose ere
awoke, and pursued him with all the agony of filial affe
driven to despair. Her path is crossed by the spect
Arvalan, who gifted by his sire with power to execute
foul purpose, in attempting which he had perished, pur
his prey into the temple of Pollear. This potent deity
censed at the sacrilegious intrusion, seizes Arvalan i
grasp, and whirls him to an immense distance. Kai
ignorant of the power who had saved her, continues
flight, till she stumbles at the roots of a manchineil,
lies like a corpse beneath its deadly shade. Here she
have perished; but a Glendoveer, or good genius, one o
most amiable of created intelligences, taking compassi
her forlorn state, bears her to Mount Himacoot, the a
of Casyapa, the Saturn of Hindostan, and father of all
inferior gods. The aged deity, who wants power to co
with Kehama, warns the Glendoveer of the risk of u
taking the protection of one persecuted by the tyrant, w
encroachments on the deities became every day more
midable. Charmed with the beauties and virtues whic
has rescued, the Glendoveer determines not to abandon
yal, and conveys her in the "ship of heaven," one o
most awkward contrivances of the poem, to the Swer
terrestrial paradise, the abode of Indra. Here also he
a cold reception, for Indra trembles at Kehama. K

prays to be returned to earth, that she may assuage, by participation, the lot of her father; and Indra, affected by her virtue, finally resolves to afford her and Ladurlad a temporary asylum.

> ————"Where Ganges has its birth,
> Below our sphere and yet above the earth;
> There may Ladurlad rest beyond the power
> Of the dread Rajah till the fated hour."

The hour apprehended by Indra was fast approaching. Ninety-nine steeds had already bled on Seeva's altar, and when another victim should complete the sacrifice, the power of Kehama must supersede that of the sovereign of the Swerga. The horse destined for this purpose was carefully guarded; but the troops watched him at a distance because the touch of human hand would render him unfit for the altar. He is driven forward by the contracting bands of archers, who only leave him a passage to the temple. His terror at the unaccustomed objects, and the deep silence with which an immense crowd watched for the completion of the sacrifice, are described in thrilling language. As Kehama lifts the axe, a man springs from the crowd to seize the hallowed steed. A thousand archers at once discharge their shafts; but they fall harmless from the invulnerable stranger, who mounts the steed, gallops round the circle, and renders the victim thus profaned totally unfit for the purpose of the sacrificer. The intruder is dragged to the feet of Kehama, but on him (for it was Ladurlad) the Rajah had already exercised all his vengeance. He therefore turned his fury on the troops, who did not prevent his intrusion; and a scene of blood ensues perfectly characteristic of Indian manners, and described with all the dreadful graces of poetry.

The consequences of this horrible massacre are painted with equal truth and sublimity.

> "The steam of slaughter from that place of blood
> Spread o'er the tainted sky.
> Vultures for whom the Rajah's tyranny
> So oft had furnished food, from far and nigh
> Sped to the lure: aloft with joyful cry
> Wheeling around, they hover'd over head;
> Or on the temple perch'd, with greedy eye,
> Impatient watch'd the dead.
> Far off the tigers in the inmost wood,
> Heard the death-shriek, and snuff'd the scent of blood.

They rose, and through the covert went their way,
Couch'd at the forest's edge, and waited for their prey."

Ladurlad meanwhile had wandered from the scene of cruelty, and almost unwittingly reached the habitation of his earlier days. This is one of the most beautiful passages of the poem, and displays, in an eminent degree, the art with which Mr. Southey has contrived to unite the supernatural tone of his poem with the genuine feelings of humanity, and thus given the sufferings of Ladurlad an interest of which the utter impossibility of his case might otherwise seem to deprive him. The scene of former happiness, the recollection of his deceased wife and persecuted daughter, rush upon him with double force, at the sight of the desolation occasioned by his absence from what was once the spot of domestic peace. The distant mirth of his former neighbours, heard from the village market-place, is exquisitely described as acting upon the miserable man like an insult to his wretchedness, although he knew they were not aware of his presence. These sad reveries are interrupted by the apparition of Arvalan. This unrelenting spectre proceeds to new acts of insult, but is put to flight by Ereenia, the benevolent Glendoveer, who, in obedience to the commands of Indra, conveys Ladurlad to his daughter's temporary asylum at the holy source of the Ganges.

In the delicious groves which surround Mount Meru, the persecuted pair are joined by Yedillian, the deceased wife of Ladurlad, and mother of Kailyal; and the society thus strangely assembled, consisting of a genie, a ghost, and two mortals, continue a while in happiness, notwithstanding an attempt of the inveterate Arvalan, assisted by a potent enchantress, to intrude upon their place of refuge. But in the opening of the twelfth section they are disturbed by the intelligence that Kehama is about to renew the sacrifice which had been interrupted, and that there was no safety for them in Mount Meru. The mortals return, the fiery curse again occupies the heart and brain of Ladurlad, and hardly do they stand upon middle earth when the blow is struck, and the sacrifice completed.

"Around her Father's neck the Maiden lock'd
Her arms, when that portentous blow was given;
Clinging to him she heard the dread uproar,
And felt the shuddering shock which ran through Heaven.
Earth underneath them rock'd,

Her strong foundations heaving in commotion,
Such as wild winds upraise in raving Ocean,
As though the solid base were rent asunder.
And lo! where, storming the astonish'd sky,
Kehama and his evil host ascend!
Before them rolls the thunder,
Ten thousand thousand lightnings round them fly,
Upward the lengthening pageantries aspire,
Leaving from Earth to Heaven a widening wake of fire."

Neither earth nor heaven was to afford Kailyal rest. A band of Yoguees or profligate priests seize her as a bride for Jaga-naut, in whose name they prosecute their infamous pleasures. Kailyal is led in a procession, which is described with magnificent luxuriance. She is imprisoned in the interior of the temple, and the chief Bramin approaches his prey, when he is anticipated by the spectre, who dashes him to earth, and occupies his dead body. The Glendoveer again appears, but is hurried off by the demons who attend the son of Kehama. Kailyal sets fire to the pagoda, and Arvalan, who was now sensible to the flames, flies in dismay; while Ladurlad, fenced by his enemy's curse against the rage of every element, rushes through the conflagration, and rescues his daughter from its fury.

In the next section the father and daughter proceed to the release of the benevolent Glendoveer. Kailyal had learned from the exulting expressions of Arvalan, that he had imprisoned his rival in the sepulchre of an ancient monarch, Baly by name, whose capital had been overwelmed by the ocean. The obscure yet wondrous remains of the submarine city are displayed in the most glowing and romantic colours. Ladurlad, over whom the sea had no power, enters gardens where earthly vegetation was replaced by a thousand marine productions which emulated all the splendours of Flora, and penetrated to the caverns where the race of the mighty Baly were deposited in death.

"Deep in the marble rock, the Hall
Of death was hollowed out, a chamber wide,
Low-roof'd, and long; on either side,
Each in his own alcove, and on his throne,
The Kings of old were seated: in his hand
Each held the sceptre of command,
From whence, across that scene of endless night,
A carbuncle diffused its everlasting light."

At the extremity of this awful range of sepulchres he be-

holds Ereenia chained to the rock, and guarded by a huge sea monster, whose conflict with Ladurlad is one of the most (unnatural we cannot say) but unpleasing and useless prodigies in the poem. They struggle for a whole week, the one secured by the anathema of Kehama, the other by his invulnerable scales. The contest finds a singular termination: "the beast must sleep or die;" and as Ladurlad presses too closely on him to admit of repose, the latter alternative becomes inevitable. Ladurlad now frees the Glendoveer, and they joyously ascend to the earth, where Kailyal awaited their return on the shore. The pleasure of their meeting is checked by the reappearance of the eternal Arvalan, on whom all former correction had been thrown away. At this nice moment Baly, who, in consequence of his virtues, had been constituted judge of Padalon (the Hindoo hell), happened to be taking his yearly walk upon earth, and, espying his advantage, seized upon Arvalan, his confederate enchantress, and their assistants; and without waiting for Kehama, who was hastening to the rescue of his son, regained the infernal territories, yet inaccessible to the Rajah's power, and secured his prisoners. Kehama, thus anticipated, meditates new persecutions for the unhappy Kailyal, whose hand he now demands for himself, alleging that he and she alone were destined to partake of the amreeta, or cup of immortality, which he speedily hoped to compell Yamen, the Pluto of the Bramin Tartarus, to deliver. The description of Kehama, when he softened his terrors, reminds us of the Satan of Milton, yet stands the comparison.

"Pride could not quit his eye,
Nor that remorseless nature from his front
Depart: yet whoso had beheld him then
Had felt some admiration mix'd with dread,
And might have said
That sure he seemed to be the King of Men;
Less than the greatest that he could not be,
Who carried in his port such might and majesty."

His suit, though backed by the proffered recall of the fatal curse, is steadily rejected by Ladurlad and Kailyal, and he leaves them with an aggravated anathema.

The daring Glendoveer meanwhile had scaled Mount Calasay, the empyreum where Bramah, Vishnoo, and Seeva dwell in an abyss of light. Here he is directed to descend to the kingdom of Yamen, and await the unravelling of the

will of destiny. Though this seemed but indifferent consolation, the Glendoveer, with Kailyal and her father, undertakes the melancholy journey. They cross the sea which divides middle earth from the realms of Yamen, and find upon the opposite shore the crowds who wait admittance into his dreary kingdom. Padalon was encircled by an icy mound. Eight gates gave access to this region of punishment, and at each the warders mounted double guard, apprehensive of the invasion of Kehama, who, having conquered earth and sky, now threatened hell itself. The visitors enter Padalon in a chariot, which hung self-balanced on a single wheel. Here the scene was altered.

"Far other light than that of day there shone,
Upon the travellers, entering Padalon.
They, too, in darkness entered on their way,
But, far before the Car,
A glow, as of a fiery furnace light,
Fill'd all before them. 'Twas a light which made
Darkness itself appear
A thing of comfort, and the sight dismay'd
Shrunk inward from the molten atmosphere.
Their way was through the adamantine rock
Which girt the World of Wo; on either side
Its massive walls arose, and overhead
Arch'd the long passage; onward as they ride,
With stronger glare the light around them spread,
And lo! the regions dread,
The World of Wo before them, opening wide."

The single-wheeled car crosses the fiery flood on a "rib of steel," sharp as the edge of a sabre, while the screams and torments of the damned in the gulf beneath are described with all the gloomy power of Dante. Even a new feature of terror is afforded to these accursed regions by the apprehended insurrection of their inhabitants, who, expecting the descent of Kehama, their deliverer, are with difficulty retained in subjection by multiplied guards and additional tortures. Through such sounds and sights of terror, the suppliants at length reach the judgment-seat of Yamen. His golden throne is propped at the three corners by three figures red-hot, yet retaining the form and sensations of humanity: the fourth corner is unsupported. As in this tottering state it could not afford a secure seat for the monarch of Padalon, Yamen had placed himself upon a huge marble sepulchre, the abode of his consort Azyoruca, who received

into her hundred arms the souls whose doom her husband pronounced.

Yamen had scarcely welcomed the fugitives, when the approach of Kehama to storm his realms became manifest, and the tumult of hell, the clang of the tormentors' scourges and the shrieks of the sufferers, were lost in a dreadful interval of suspense.

> "The voice of lamentation ceased in Hell,
> And sudden silence all around them fell,
> Silence more wild and terrible
> Than all the infernal dissonance before:
> Through that portentous stillness, far away,
> Unwonted sounds were heard advancing on
> And deepening on their way."

This sublime passage announces the Rajah, and we could have wished that it had altogether superseded the account of his actual assault; which, though perfectly consonant to Hindoo superstition, is far too extravagant for a serious poem. Kehama, self-multiplied by the attribute of divine power which he had extorted from heaven, stood at the self-same moment before the eight gates of hell, stormed each of them at the same instant, and advanced, as it were, in eight columns over the eight causeways which led to the throne of Yamen. The penal fires grew pale before the lightnings which attended his career, and the thunders of hell were drowned in the louder terrors which proclaimed his march. The gates of the Hindoo pandæmonium are burst open, and the Rajah in all his forms surrounds its monarch.—The strife is judiciously veiled by darkness, but the issue is not long dubious. Kehama, having resumed his individuality, is discovered seated on the marble tomb, with Yamen under his feet. He demands of the three living statues who prop the golden throne, what they are, and for whom the fourth place is reserved. They answer by a description of their vices, and declare in chorus that the vacant corner is destined for one equal in guilt to themselves, and that they had long looked for that one in Kehama. The Rajah smiled contemptuously, and ordered the amreeta to be brought forth: obedient to his voice, the marble sepulchre opened, and "a huge anatomy within its womb" presented the "cup of immortality."

The Rajah again invites Kailyal to partake his power, accompanied by a threat that if she refuses, her father shall

supply the vacant place under the judgment-seat of Yamen. Both remain unmoved: "the resolute heart and virtuous will" oppose the tyrant even in the plentitude of his triumph over death and fate. Kehama had no sooner quaffed the amreeta, than he experienced the doom of his impious ambition:—immortality, happy immortality at least, could not be the meed of evil; the liquor ran through his veins in a stream of molten fire, torturing but not destroying his frame; and the Rajah, maugre his omnipotence, feels himself compelled to assume his place, the fourth burning column of the infernal throne. Kailyal now drinks; but the amreeta, of which the qualities were beneficent or malignant according to the properties of those who partook of it, did but consume the dross of humanity, and qualify her to enjoy immortal happiness with her beloved Ereenia. The god of death then casts his eye upon Ladurlad, who sinks at the glance into his last mortal slumber.

> "Blessed that sleep, more blessed was the waking,
> For on that night a heavenly morning broke;
> The light of heaven was round him when he woke,
> And in the Swerga in Yedillian's bower,
> All whom he loved he met to part no more."

Such is the termination of this singular poem, which, notwithstanding its wild and extravagant tenor, riveted our attention more powerfully than anything which we have lately perused. It is difficult to adopt any certain rule of criticism with respect to a production so anomalous. In other cases we perceive the mark at which the author has aimed, and can therefore judge whether he has fallen short of it; but Mr. Southey resembles Acestes, who shot merely to show the strength of his bow, and the height to which he could send his arrow.

> ——"Volans liquidis in nubibus arsit arundo
> Signavitque viam flammis."

In this point of view, it is impossible to read the *Curse of Kehama* without conceiving the highest opinion of the author's force of imagination, and power of expression. The passages which we have quoted will bear us out in asserting, that no bard of modern days possesses a more abundant share of imagination, the highest of poetic qualities. There is a glow, an exuberancy even in his descriptions, indicating a richness of fancy adequate to supply the waste not of use

only, but of extravagance; and perhaps it is a natural consequence of such attributes, that, like Collins, "he loves fairies, genii, giants and monsters—delights to rove through the meanders of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, and to repose by the water-falls of Elysian gardens." To this taste we owe the "wild and wondrous tale" of *Thalaba*, and the still more wild and wondrous *Curse of Kehama.* If we compare these extraordinary poems we shall find, that though they bear the same relation to each other as those paintings which are termed companions, their leading features are nevertheless different. The mythology of *Thalaba* is drawn from a source with which we became early acquainted. Turbans and scimitars, caliphs and viziers, dervises and calendars, mosques and minarets, the practice and almost the theory of the Moslem religion, are familiar to us, from those delightful days when awakening fancy first rioted on the banquet of fictitious narrative. But what the *Curse of Kehama* wants in the charm of early prepossession, it enjoys in the more important quality of edification. The Hindoo religion, of which Europeans, nay, Indo-Europeans, know little, excepting from the ponderous labours of a few literati, is not only curious as one of the most ancient existing superstitions, but particularly interesting, as regulating the religious belief and moral practice of millions, whom treaty or conquest has united to the British empire.

But it must not be understood, while we are thus expressing our thanks for the form in which so much instruction is conveyed to us, that we consider Mr. Southey as having employed the energies of his genius, and the treasures of his knowledge, in constructing a tale which should have no higher object than to introduce to the world *the Hindoo mythology made plain and easy to the meanest capacity.* The poet, we apprehend, had discovered, that on this mythology he could raise such a fabric as he now presents to us—that he could reduce its unwieldy and disjointed parts into some kind of form—and, divesting of extravagance what he found in it of sublimity, employ the means, which a particular superstition offered to his hands, in the production of a work which should excite an interest as universal as that of the most probable fable. And here we feel that our highest tribute of praise is due to Mr. Southey, as

a poet and a man. In whatever degree the cause of virtue and of morals—and we must be blind indeed not to discover his uniform exertions on their side—has been indebted to him heretofore, it has now to acknowledge far more splendid services. His heroine does not owe triumph to supernatural interpositions, founded on principles of which the development can neither increase our interest nor admiration. From the Gods she could derive but little assistance; for, till the final incident of the poem takes place, the *victrix causa* seems to be that of their enemy. Heaven itself stands in need of Ladurlad; and, together with him, she is identified with the interests of its inhabitants. Whence, then, springs this union ultimately so effectual in baffling the ambitious purposes of Kehama? The answer is obvious;—from the moral character of Kailyal, which is perpetually opposed to the inordinate attempts, and almost omnipotent wickedness of the Rajah. His persecutions serve only to increase her patience and piety, and to turn her mind into itself in search of means of defence against her singular calamities. To the moral agency of this principle the poem owes its grandeur, at once splendid and severe.

A work which combines with circumstances of this nature a powerful imaginative character, has certainly advanced far towards perfection in one of the chief objects of poetry—the elevation of the human mind; which is thus for a time lifted above the sphere of common life, its low pursuits and passions, and carried into an empyreum of fancy, where it may rove at will through blissful regions of its own creation. It is impossible for a reader of feeling to rise from such a poem without being sensible of this abstraction; without a consciousness that he has at least enjoyed a glimpse of virtue—that his heart has been warmed by her influence—and that, however transient this influence might be, it brought with it a conviction of the existence of that divine original from which it sprung. Poetry, indeed, cannot create a soil for virtue to take root in; but whenever it appears in its loftier character, it seldom fails to invigorate and enrich that in which it is already implanted.

Some remarks upon the conduct of the work will naturally be expected from us. In this Mr. Southey had to struggle with two great difficulties. The poem being entirely mythological, and the agents, generally speaking, having little

in common with humanity, it must, at first sight, seem difficult to preserve that interest in the action of the piece which forms the principal charm of narrative. The poet, whose heart is always true to moral feeling, has overcome this disadvantage by the beautiful picture of filial affection exhibited in the amiable and virtuous Kailyal. It is this secret charm which gives interest to the adventures of the persecuted pair, remote as they are from all resemblance to possibility. The purity, simplicity, and self-devotion of this injured female sanctify her, as it were, in our fancy; nor can we consider as overstrained the beautiful passage in which her virtue, like that of Spenser's Una, is described as subjugating brute ferocity:—

> "A charm was on the leopard, when he came
> Within the circle of that mystic glade;
> Submiss he crouch'd before the heavenly maid,
> And offered to her touch his speckled side;
> Or with arched back erect, and bending head,
> And eyes half closed for pleasure, would he stand,
> Courting the pressure of her gentle hand."

The portrait of Ladurlad is also interesting, though in a less degree. The imagination is unable to receive the idea of intolerable torture existing for such a length of time; and although the poet has judiciously broken the spell by intervals of repose, yet when we consider the exertions made in the delivery of the Glendoveer, we are led to suspect that the pain had become sufferable by endurance. The love of the Glendoveer reminded us of the Comte de Gabalis, and of Pope, who adapted to comic machinery the attachment of his airy beings. It is, perhaps, less fitted to serious poetry; for so inseparable are our ideas even of sentimental affection, from the pangs of jealousy and the tumults of desire, that we can hardly conceive love, in the sense usually affixed to the word, existing between two beings of different natures, any more than between two persons of the same sex. But as Satan is the hero of Paradise Lost, so Kehama, partaking of his haughty and ambitious character, and exceeding him in power, is far the most prominent figure in the poem. Mr. Southey has happily embodied his conception of an human being approaching in power to a divinity, in malignity to the evil principle. Severer critics may, however, censure the passage in the seventeenth section, where Baly carries off Arvalan; and where the Rajah, instead of attempting his

rescue, proposes himself as a suitor of Kailyal, and thus altogether changes the motive of her persecution. Even when Kehama had subdued the god of hell, we hear nothing of his releasing Arvalan, although his affection for him is the main cause of the curse of Ladurlad. But we are more inclined to censure the conclusion of Kehama's career, as inconsistent with the dignity of his character and the extent of his powers. Something like the same incident is to be found in one of the tales of the Genii, where the waters of oblivion prove the waters of death; but this is more ingenious than the expedient by which Seeva humbles Kehama in the very height of his triumph. After all, a similar objection would probably have occurred to any manner in which the tale could be concluded: for as Kehama had been almost raised to a level with Omnipotence, it would not be easy to devise any adequate mode of accomplishing his overthrow.

A second difficulty which Mr. Southey had to encounter, is that of adapting the vast and clumsy fabric of Indian mythology to the purposes of English poetry. We have observed the advantages which this presented; and the inconveniences are pointed out by the poet himself, when he acknowledges the anti-picturesque exterior of the Hindoo deities, and the frantic extravagance of the fables in which they are agents. Neither does he disguise the obvious objection, that the English reader may be startled by being plunged at once into a new and unknown system. The last difficulty Mr. Southey has removed by a list of those deities who occupy a place among his dramatis personæ, and by distinguishing the character and functions of each. The other inconvenience was not so easily parried. Mr. Southey has, indeed, generally speaking, chosen the most pleasing of the Hindoo traditions. But while plunging into such an abyss of monstrous and outrageous fictions, the poet, perhaps, became more familiarized with the Eastern style than was quite consistent with the necessary severity of selection, and we have been not a little startled at some of the topics which he has chosen to celebrate. We have already stated our objections to the eight-days' combat of Ladurlad with the sea-monster, and to the self-multiplication of Kehama, on his storming Padalon. We would have included in our expurganda Indra's elemental palace, built partly of fire, partly of water, had not the poetry been so exquisitely beautiful as

to excuse extravagance itself: but a globe which the sorceress Lorrinite composed of the pupils of human eyes, we must condemn without mercy. We would also send to the Remise a certain infernal car, which, as it only moved on one wheel, must have been a precarious vehicle, even if it had traversed a road broader than the edge of a scimitar. The description of Mount Calasay, a silver hill, with seven silver ladders, is too much like a tale of Madame D'Aunois; and we cannot help remarking, that Yamen-pur, the metropolis of the infernal regions, being made of a single diamond, is the more brilliant habitation of the two. Accustomed as we are to the Grecian Cupid, we cannot reconcile ourselves to Camdeo's bowstring, which being composed of live bees, must have been singularly ill adapted to the purposes of archery; nor are we at all pleased with the bees breaking off upon one occasion, and hiving upon Kailyal's head. These and similar imperfections, however, were almost inseparable from a plan laid in the wildest regions of fiction. The Greeks alone have contrived to reconcile to grace, and to a decent probability, their mythological fables, while the Hindoos have, of all nations, run farthest into the extremes of tumid and unimaginable absurdity.

We can the more readily pardon Mr. Southey for following in a few instances, the bad taste of his model, because one of his principal beauties is derived from the uncommon art with which he has maintained the character of a poet of Hindostan. We have scarcely been able to find a passage, in which we are reminded that the bard is a European. The ornaments, the landscape, the animals, the similes, the language, the sentiments, are Oriental; selected, indeed, and arranged with more art than any Eastern poet could have displayed; but still composed of the very materials which he must necessarily have employed. This observation of manners and costume, is carried still farther than in Madoc. There the poet established among his imaginary Atzeucas, various rites observed in different parts of America; but here, where materials were more amply supplied, his manners and sentiments are not merely Oriental, but so distinctly and exclusively Hindoo, that they could be properly ascribed to no other Indian faith, and would be misplaced, had the story respected Mahometans, Thibetians, or Parsees. The genius and moral feeling of the author are, indeed,

visibly superior to the colours with which he works; yet this superiority cannot be perceived from the Englishman breaking forth in any particular passage; but from the general light diffused over the whole picture, like that communicated by the sun to nature upon those days in which his orb is not visible.

Weighing, therefore, the beauties, and the imperfections connected with the author's plan, the former will be found to preponderate in a very great degree. But could not Mr. Southey have selected some subject, admitting all that is excellent, and excluding all that is extravagant in his poem? We should be deficient indeed in our art, if we could not answer in the affirmative. As Mr. Southey himself, however, was to write the poem, it is only reverence for the reader's leisure, which prevents our demanding that he shall choose for his next theme, one which will allow him to display the sublimity of Homer, the majesty of Virgil, the fancy of Ariosto, the chaste taste of Tasso, the solemnity of Dante, and all the attributes of all the first poets. But would our advice be reasonable? Or rather, would it not resemble the resolution of the mad monarch, the execution of which he wisely commits to his ministers?

> "He shall have chariots easier than air.
> *Which I will have invented*——
> And thou shalt ride before him, on a horse
> Cut out of an entire diamond,
> That shall be made to go with golden wheels
> *I know not how yet.*"————

This is the false gallop of criticism—it is not pointing out to an author any reasonable object to be attained; but insidiously hinting at some unknown point of excellence, with whose bearings we doubtless are acquainted, though we kindly leave the poet to find them out as he can. In this we see neither wit nor wisdom: and shame on our craft if this finesse be its excellence! In judging of every human production, we can only estimate how far it exceeds or falls short of the common exertions of humanity; and it shows equal ignorance and injustice to attempt reducing it to the imaginary standard of some *beau idéal*, of which neither the author nor the critic has any distinct or accurate perception.

We have already noticed the singular style of versifica-

tion employed in this poem, which resembles the Pindarics of the seventeenth century. In the construction and return of his language, and even of his modulations, we observe a marked imitation of Milton, and there are passages in which the sense also approaches very nearly to that of our great classic. The flight of Arvalan, when

> "Thrice through the vulnerable shade
> The Glendoveer impels the griding blade," &c.

inevitably recalls the *griding* sword of Michael. The beautiful retreat of the celestial inhabitants from the profaned Swerga, reminded us of the secession of the Hamadryads in the hymn to the *Nativity*. But Mr. Southey, though we can discern that Milton is his favourite poet, is in no respect a servile imitator of his sublime model. His picture of the infernal regions may stand comparison with any poetic vision of those penal fires, from the days of Homer to those of Klopstock. The description hovers between that of Dante and Milton; not exhibiting the tedious particularity of the former, yet more detailed than that of the latter. The approach of the mortals to Padalon seems to us equal in grandeur to any passage which we ever perused. We will quote a few lines and close our criticism, though our subject is far from being exhausted.

> "Far other light than that of day there shone
> Upon the travellers entering Padalon.
> They, too, in darkness entered on their way,
> But, far before the Car,
> A glow, as of a fiery furnace light,
> Fill'd all before them. 'Twas a light which made
> Darkness itself appear
> A thing of comfort, and the sight, dismay'd,
> Shrunk inward from the molten atmosphere.
> Their way was through the adamantine rock
> Which girt the World of Wo; on either side
> Its massive walls arose, and overhead
> Arch'd the long passage; onward as they ride,
> With stronger glare, the light around them spread,
> And lo! the regions dread,
> The World of Wo before them, opening wide.
>
> There rolls the fiery flood,
> Girding the realms of Padalon around.
> A sea of flame it seem'd to be,
> Sea without bound;
> For neither mortal, nor immortal sight,
> Could pierce across through that intensest light."

The notes contain a profusion of Eastern learning, and the massive blocks which Mr. Southey has selected as specimens of Bramanical poetry and mythology, give us at once an idea of the immense quarries, in which the author must have laboured, and of the taste, skill, and labour necessary to fashion such unwieldy materials into the beautiful forms which they exhibit in the text.

Every theme, however pleasing, has its bounds, and we must bid farewell to Mr. Southey, grateful for the pleasure afforded us. We can presage nothing as to the popularity of the present poem. Its faults lie on the surface, and are of a kind obnoxious to sarcasm and malicious ridicule. But its beauties are infinite, and it possesses that high qualification for popularity, the power of exciting a painful and sustained interest. There are still, surely, among us those who will tolerate the eccentricities of genius, in consideration of its lofty properties—properties which distinguish all the works of the poet; but which shine forth with transcendant lustre, in the Curse of Kehama.

Before we quit the poem, we are bound to notice the novel and beautiful manner in which it is printed. In general a page of poetry is displeasing to fastidious eyes, from the irregular terminations of the lines; this deformity is not only obviated, but a remarkable elegance in the typographic art is introduced in its stead. The centre of every verse is so placed, as to preserve an equal breadth of margin on each side, and to give the page a lapidary kind of appearance, which is singularly striking and agreeable, even before the cause of it is discovered. We hope that every "wire wove, hot pressed" poem, composed upon this model, will be printed with the same attention to picturesque beauty, as the Curse of Kehama, which has led the way to the only improvement of which the art of printing, in its present advanced state, is, perhaps, susceptible.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE. CANTO IV.*

[Quarterly Review, 1818.]

"Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been—
A sound which makes us linger;—yet—farewell!
Ye! who have traced the Pilgrim to the scene
Which is his last, if in your memories dwell
A thought which once was his, if on ye swell
A single recollection, not in vain
He wore his sandal-shoon, and scallop-shell;
Farewell! with *him* alone may rest the pain,
If such there were—with *you*, the moral of his strain!"

THIS solemn valediction, the concluding stanza of Lord Byron's poem, forms at once a natural and an impressive motto to our essay. "There are few things," says the moralist, "not purely evil, of which we can say, without some emotion of uneasiness, *this is the last.* Those who could never agree together shed tears when mutual discontent has determined them to final separation, and of a place that has been frequently visited, though without pleasure, the last look is taken with heaviness of heart." When we resume, therefore, our task of criticism, and are aware that we are exerting it for the last time upon this extraordinary work, we feel no small share of reluctance to part with the Pilgrim, whose wanderings have so often beguiled our labours, and diversified our pages. We part from *Childe Harold* as from the pleasant and gifted companion of an interesting tour, whose occasional waywardness, obstinacy, and caprice are forgotten in the depth of thought with which he commented upon subjects of interest as they passed before us, and in the brilliancy with which he coloured such scenery as addressed itself to the imagination. His faults, if we at all remember them, are recollected only with pity,

* *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. Canto IV.* By Lord Byron.

as affecting himself indeed, but no longer a concern of ours: —his merits acquire double value in our eyes when we call to mind that we may perhaps never more profit by them. The scallop-shell and staff are now laid aside, the pilgrimage is accomplished, and Lord Byron, in his assumed character, is no longer to delight us with the display of his wondrous talents, or provoke us by the use he sometimes condescends to make of them—a use which at times has reminded us of his own powerful simile,

> "It was as is a new-dug grave,
> Closing o'er one we sought to save."

Before we part, however, we feel ourselves impelled to resume a consideration of his *Pilgrimage*, not as consisting of detached accounts of foreign scenery and of the emotions suggested by them, but as a whole poem, written in the same general spirit, and pervaded by the same cast of poetry. In doing this, we are conscious we must repeat much which has perhaps been better said by others, and even be guilty of the yet more unpardonable crime of repeating ourselves. But if we are not new we will at least be brief, and the occasion seems to us peculiarly favourable for placing before our readers the circumstances which secured to the Pilgrimage of Childe Harold a reception so generally popular. The extrinsic circumstances, which refer rather to the state of the public taste than to the genius and talent of the author, claim precedence in order, because, though they are not those on which the fame of the poet must ultimately rest, they are unquestionably the scaffolding by means of which the edifice was first raised which now stands independent of them.

Originality, as it is the highest and rarest property of genius, is also that which has most charms for the public. Not that originality is always necessary, for the world will be contented, in the poverty of its mental resources, with mere novelty or singularity, and must therefore be enchanted with a work that exhibits both qualities. The vulgar author is usually distinguished by his treading, or attempting to tread, in the steps of the reigning favourite of the day. He is didactic, sentimental, romantic, epic, pastoral, according to the taste of the moment, and his "fancies and delights," like those of Master Justice Shallow, are sure to be adapted

to the tunes *which the carmen whistle.* The consequence is, not that the herd of imitators gain their object, but that the melody which they have profaned becomes degraded in the sated ears of the public—its original richness, wildness, and novelty are forgotten when it is made manifest how easily the leading notes can be caught and parodied, and whatever its intrinsic merit may have been, it becomes, for the time, stale and fulsome. If the composition which has been thus hunted down possesses intrinsic merit, it may—indeed it will—eventually revive and claim its proper place amid the poetical galaxy; deprived, indeed, of the adventitious value which it may at first have acquired from its novelty, but at the same time no longer overshaded and incumbered by the crowd of satellites now consigned to chaos and primeval night. When the success of Burns, writing in his native dialect with unequalled vigour and sweetness, had called from their flails an hundred peasants to cudgel their brains for rhymes, we can well remember that even the bard of Coila was somewhat injured in the common estimation—as a masterpiece of painting is degraded by being placed amid the flaring colours and ill-drawn figures of imitative daubers. The true poet attempts the very reverse of the imitator. He plunges into the stream of public opinion even when its tide is running strongest, crosses its direction, and bears his crown of laurel as Cæsar did his imperial mantle, triumphant above the waves. Such a phenomenon seldom fails at first to divide and at length to alter the reigning taste of the period, and if the bold adventurer has successfully buffeted the ebbing tide which bore up his competitor, he soon has the benefit of the flood in his own favour.

In applying these general remarks to Lord Byron's gravest and most serious performance, we must recall to the reader's recollection that since the time of Cowper he has been the first poet who, either in his own person, or covered by no very thick disguise, has directly appeared before the public, an actual living man expressing his own sentiments, thoughts, hopes, and fears. Almost all the poets of our day, who have possessed a considerable portion of public attention, are personally little known to the reader, and can only be judged from the passions and feelings assigned by them to persons totally fictitious. Childe Harold appeared—we

must not say in the character of *the* author—but certainly in that of a real existing person, with whose feelings as such the public were disposed to associate those of Lord Byron. Whether the reader acted right or otherwise in persisting to neglect the shades of distinction which the author endeavoured to point out betwixt his pilgrim and himself, it is certain that no little power over the public attention was gained from their being identified. Childe Harold may not be, nor do we believe he is, Lord Byron's very self, but he is Lord Byron's picture, sketched by Lord Byron himself, arrayed in a fancy dress, and disguised perhaps by some extrinsic attributes, but still bearing a sufficient resemblance to the original to warrant the conclusion that we have drawn. This identity is so far acknowledged in the preface to the Canto now before us, where Lord Byron thus expresses himself:—

> "The poem also, or the pilgrim, or both, have accompanied me from first to last; and perhaps it may be a pardonable vanity which induces me to reflect with complacency on a composition which in some degree connects me with the spot where it was produced, and the objects it would fain describe; and however unworthy it may be deemed of those magical and memorable abodes, however short it may fall of our distant conceptions and immediate impressions, yet as a mark of respect for what is venerable, and of feeling for what is glorious, it has been to me a source of pleasure in the production, and I part with it with a kind of regret, which I hardly suspected that events could have left me for imaginary objects."—Pp. vi, vii.

But besides the pleasing novelty of a traveller and a poet, throwing before the reader his reflections and opinions, his loves and his hates, his raptures and his sorrows; besides the novelty and pride which the public felt, upon being called as it were into familiarity with a mind so powerful, and invited to witness and partake of its deep emotions; the feelings themselves were of a character which struck with awe those to whom the noble pilgrim thus exposed the sanctuary of his bosom. They were introduced into no Teian paradise of lutes and maidens, were placed in no hall resounding with music and dazzling with many-coloured lights, and called upon to gaze on those gay forms that flutter in the muse's beam. The banquet had ceased, and it was the pleasure of its melancholy lord that his guests should witness that gloominess, which seems most dismal when it succeeds to exuberant and unrestrained gaiety. The emptied wine-cup

lay on the ground, the withered garland was flung aside and trodden under foot, the instruments of music were silent, or waked but those few and emphatic chords which express sorrow; while, amid the ruins of what had once been the palace of pleasure, the stern pilgrim stalked from desolation to desolation, spurning from him the implements of former luxury, and repelling with equal scorn the more valuable substitutes which wisdom and philosophy offered to supply their place. The reader felt as it were in the presence of a superior being, when, instead of his judgment being consulted, his imagination excited or soothed, his taste flattered or conciliated in order to bespeak his applause, he was told, in strains of the most sublime poetry, that neither he, the courteous reader, nor aught the earth had to show, was worthy the attention of the noble traveller.—All countries he traversed with a heart for entertaining the beauties of nature, and an eye for observing the crimes and follies of mankind; and from all he drew subjects of sorrow, of indignation, of contempt. From Dan to Beersheba all was barrenness. To despise the ordinary sources of happiness, to turn with scorn from the pleasures which captivate others, and to endure, as it were voluntarily, evils which others are most anxious to shun, is a path to ambition; for the monarch is scarcely more respected for possessing, than the anchoret for contemning the means of power and of pleasure. A mind like that of Harold, apparently indifferent to the usual enjoyments of life, and which entertains, or at least exhibits, such contempt for its usual pursuits, has the same ready road to the respect of the mass of mankind, who judge that to be superior to humanity which can look down upon its common habits, tastes, and pleasures.

This fashion of thinking and writing of course had its imitators, and those right many. But the humorous sadness which sat so gracefully on the original made but a poor and awkward appearance on those who

> ——" wrapp'd themselves in 'Harold's' inky cloak,
> To show the world how 'Byron' did *not* 'write.'"

Their affected melancholy showed like the cynicism of Apemantus contrasted with the real misanthropy of Timon. And, to say the truth, we are not sorry that the fashion has latterly lost ground. This species of general contempt of

intellectual pleasures, and worldly employment, is more closely connected with the epicurean philosophy than may be at first supposed. If philosophy be but a pursuit of words, and the revolutions of empires inevitable returns of the same cycle of fearful transitions; if our earliest and best affections "run to waste, and water but the desert," the want of worthier motives to action gives a tremendous and destructive impulse to the dangerous *Carpe diem* of the Garden—that most seductive argument of sensual pleasure. This doctrine of the nothingness of human pursuits, not as contrasted with those of religion and virtue (to which they are indeed as nothing), but absolutely and in themselves, is too apt to send its pupils in despair to those pleasures which promise a real gratification, however short and gross. Thus do thoughts and opinions, in themselves the most melancholy, become incitements to the pursuit of the most degrading pleasures; as the Egyptians placed skulls upon their banqueting tables, and as the fools of Holy Writ made the daring and fearful association of imminent fate and present revelling—*Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.*

If we treat the humour less gravely, and consider it as a posture of the mind assumed for the nonce, still this enumeration of the vain pursuits, the indulged yet unsatiated passions of humanity, is apt to weary our spirits if not our patience, and the discourse terminates in a manner as edifying as the dialogue in Prior's Alma:

"'Tired with these thoughts'—'Less tired than I,'
Quoth Dick, 'with your philosophy—
That people live and die I knew,
An hour ago as well as you;
What need of books those truths to tell,
Which folks perceive who cannot spell?
And must we spectacles apply,
To view what hurts our naked eye?
If to bé sad is to be wise,
I do most heartily despise
Whatever Socrates has said,
Or Tully wrote, or Wanley read.'
'Dear Drift! to set our matters right,
Remove these papers from my sight,
Burn Mat's Des-carte and Aristotle—
Here, Jonathan, your master's bottle.'"

But it was not merely to the novelty of an author speaking in his own person, and in a tone which arrogated a con-

tempt of all the ordinary pursuits of life, that "Childe Harold" owed its extensive popularity: these formed but the point or sharp edge of the wedge by which the work was enabled to insinuate its way into that venerable block, the British public. The high claims inferred at once in the direct appeal to general attention, and scorn of general feeling, were supported by powers equal to such pretensions. He who despised the world intimated that he had the talents and genius necessary to win it if he had thought it worth while. There was a strain of poetry in which the sense predominated over the sound; there was the eye keen to behold nature, and the pen powerful to trace her varied graces of beauty or terror; there was the heart ardent at the call of freedom or of generous feeling, and belying every moment the frozen shrine in which false philosophy had incased it, glowing like the intense and concentrated alcohol, which remains one single but burning drop in the centre of the ice which its more watery particles have formed. In despite of the character which he had assumed, it was impossible not to see in the Pilgrim what nature designed him to be, and what, in spite of bad metaphysics and worse politics, he may yet be, a person whose high talents the wise and virtuous may enjoy without a qualifying sigh or frown. Should that day arrive, and if time be granted, it will arrive, we who have ventured upon the precarious task of prophecy—we who have been censured for not mingling the faults of genius with its talents—we shall claim our hour of heartfelt exultation. He himself, while deprecating censure on the ashes of another great but self-neglected genius, has well pleaded the common cause of those who, placed high above the crowd, have their errors and their follies rendered more conspicuous by their elevation.

> "Hard is his fate on whom the public gaze
> Is fix'd for ever to detract or praise;
> Repose denies her requiem to his name,
> And Folly loves the martyrdom of Fame:
> The secret enemy, whose sleepless eye
> Stands sentinel, accuser, judge and spy;
> Her for the fool, the jealous and the vain,
> The envious, who but breathe in others' pain:
> Behold the host delighting to deprave,
> Who track the steps of glory to the grave."

For ourselves, amid the various attendants on the triumph

of genius, we would far rather be the soldier who, pacing by the side of the general, mixes, with military frankness, censure amid his songs of praise, than the slave in his chariot to flatter his vanity by low adulation, or exasperate his feelings by virulent invective. In entering our protest therefore against the justice and the moral tendency of that strain of dissatisfaction and despondency, that cold and sceptical philosophy which clouds our prospects on earth, and closes those beyond it, we willingly render to this extraordinary poem the full praise that genius in its happiest efforts can demand from us.

The plan, if it can be termed so, hovers between that of a descriptive and a philosophical poem. The pilgrim passes from land to land, alternately describing, musing, meditating, exclaiming, and moralizing; and the reader, partaking of his enthusiasm, becomes almost the partner of his journey. The first and second Cantos were occupied by Spain and Greece—the former, the stage upon which those incidents were then passing which were to decide, in their consequence, the fate of existing Europe; the latter, the country whose sun, so long set, has yet left on the horizon of the world such a blaze of splendour. It is scarcely necessary to say, that in both countries, but especially in the last, the pilgrim found *room for meditation even to madness.* The third Canto saw Childe Harold once more upon the main, and traced him from Belgium to Switzerland, through scenes distinguished by natural graces, and rendered memorable by late events. Through this ample field we accompanied the Pilgrim, and the strains which describe the beauties of the Rhine and the magnificence of the Leman lake, are still glowing in our ears. The fourth Canto now appears, and recalls us to the immediate object of the present article.

The poem opens in Venice, once the mart of the universe—

"I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;
A palace and a prison on each hand:
I saw from out the wave her structures rise
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand:
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying Glory smiles
O'er the far times, when many a subject land
Look'd to the winged Lion's marble piles,
When Venice sate in state, thron'd on her hundred isles!"

The former greatness of this queen of commerce is described and mingled with the recollections associated with her name, from the immortal works of fiction of which she has formed the scene.

> "But unto us she hath a spell beyond
> Her name in story, and her long array
> Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond
> Above the Dogeless city's vanish'd sway;
> Ours is a trophy which will not decay
> With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor,
> And Pierre, cannot be swept or worn away—
> The keystones of the arch! though all were o'er,
> For us repeopled were the solitary shore.
>
> "The beings of the mind are not of clay;
> Essentially immortal, they create
> And multiply in us a brighter ray
> And more beloved existence: that which Fate
> Prohibits to dull life, in this our state
> Of mortal bondage, by these spirits supplied,
> First exiles, then replaces what we hate;
> Watering the heart whose early flowers have died,
> And with a fresher growth replenishing the void."

That this is true in philosophy as well as beautiful in poetry; that fiction as well as reality can impress local associations of the most fascinating kind, that not alone the birth-place or tomb of the man of genius, but the scenes which he has chosen for the action of his story remain dear "to our memories," and have to our ears and eyes a fascinating charm, was repeatedly experienced during the Peninsular war. Spain, separated by the ocean and the Pyrenees from the rest of Europe, and seldom in collision with Britain, save when we have encountered her fleets upon the seas, lying also beyond the ordinary course of travellers and tourists, has little familiar to us as readers of history, or as members of British society. But the authors of fiction had given associations to this country of the most interesting kind, to supply the deficiencies of the slender list afforded by history or conversation. The British officers rushed with the eagerness of enthusiasm to find in the tower of Segovia the apartment from which Gil Blas, in his captivity, looked over the wanderings of the Ebro:—even the French dealt mildly with the city of Toboso, because it had given name to the celebrated Dulcinea; and amid the romantic deserts of Sierra Morena the weary step was rendered

lighter to the readers of Cervantes, who, at every turn of their march among the landscapes which he has described with such exquisite truth and felicity, expected to see the doughty knight-errant and his trusty squire, or the beautiful vision of Dorothea, when she was surprised in boy's attire washing her feet in the rivulet. Such is the prerogative of genius! and well may it be celebrated by one who has himself impressed associations upon so much scenery, which will never, while Britons speak their present language, be seen without recollecting the Pilgrim and his musings.

The contrast of the former and present state of Venice calls forth naturally a train of moral reflections suitable to the occasion; but the noble Pilgrim, standing on the Bridge of Sighs, and having beneath his feet the dungeons of the most jealous aristocracy that ever existed; in the vicinity also of the palace of the Council of Ten, and of those "lions' mouths," by means of which the most treacherous and base of anonymous informers possessed full power over the life and fortune of the noblest citizens, might have spared his regret for the loss of that freedom which Venice never possessed. The distinction, in this and many other cases, betwixt a free and an independent nation, is not sufficiently observed. The Venetians were never a free people, though the state of Venice was not only independent, but wealthy and powerful, during the middle ages, by the extent of her commerce and the policy of her wise rulers. But commerce found a more convenient channel round the Cape of Good Hope for that trade which Venice had hitherto carried on. Her rulers overrated her strength, and engaged in a war against the confederated force of Italy, from the consequences of which, though gloriously sustained, the state never recovered. The proud republic, whose bride was the Adriatic, shared the fate of Tyre and Sidon—of all nations whose wealth and grandeur are founded exclusively on ships, colonies, and commerce. The "crowning city, whose merchants were princes, and whose traffickers were the honourable of the earth," had long passed into a state of the third class, existing merely because not demolished, and ready to give way to the first impulse of outward force. The art of the Venetian rulers in stooping to their circumstances, and bending where they must otherwise have broken, could only protract this semblance of independence

until the storm of the French Revolution destroyed Venice, among many other governments which had been respected by other conquerors from a reverence to antiquity, or from a regard for existing institutions, the very reverse of the principle which actuated the republican generals. It is surely vain to mourn for a nation which, if restored to independence, could not defend or support itself; and it would be worse than vain, were it possible, to restore the Signoria, with all its oligarchical terrors of denunciation, and secret imprisonment, and judicial murder. What is to be wished for Italy, is the amalgamation of its various petty states into one independent and well-governed kingdom, capable of asserting and maintaining her place among the nations of Europe. To this desirable order of things nothing can be a stronger obstacle than the reinstatement of the various petty divisions of that fair country, each incapable of defending itself, but ready to lend its aid to destroy its neighbours.

Of Italy, in its present state, it is impossible to think or speak without recognising the truth as well as the beauty of the following lines.

> "The commonwealth of kings, the men of Rome!
> And even since, and now, fair Italy!
> Thou art the garden of the world, the home
> Of all Art yields, and Nature can decree;
> Even in thy desert, what is like to thee?
> Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste
> More rich than other climes' fertility;
> Thy wreck a glory, and thy ruin graced
> With an immaculate charm which cannot be defaced."

Through these delightful regions the Pilgrim wanders, awakening by the flashes of his imagination that of the reader, as the face of the country suggests topics of moral interest, and reminds us alternately of the achievements of the great of former days in arms and in literature, and, as local description mingles itself with the most interesting topics of local history. Arqua, "the mountain where he died," suggests the name of Petrarch; the deserted Ferrara, the fame and the fate of Tasso, fitly classed with Dante and Ariosto, the bards of Hell and Chivalry. Florence, and its statues Thrasimene and Clitumnus, start up before us with their scenery, and their recollections. Perhaps there are no verses in our language of happier descriptive power than

the two stanzas which characterize the latter river. In general, poets find it so difficult to leave an interesting subject, that they injure the distinctness of the description, by loading it so as to embarrass rather than excite the fancy of the reader; or else, to avoid that fault, they confine themselves to cold and abstract generalities. The author has, in the following stanzas, admirably steered his course betwixt these extremes. While they present the outlines of a picture as pure and brilliant as those of Claude Lorraine, the task of filling up the more minute particulars is judiciously left to the imagination of the reader; and it must be dull indeed if it does not supply what the poet has left unsaid, or but generally and briefly intimated. While the eye glances over the lines, we seem to feel the refreshing coolness of the scene—we hear the bubbling tale of the more rapid streams—and see the slender proportions of the rural temple reflected in the crystal depth of the calm pool:—

"But thou, Clitumnus! in thy sweetest wave
Of the most living crystal that was e'er
The haunt of river-nymph, to gaze and lave
Her limbs where nothing hid them, thou dost rear
The grassy bank whereon the milk-white steer
Grazes; the purest god of gentle waters!
And most serene of aspect, and most clear;
Surely that stream was unprofaned by slaughters—
A mirror and a bath for Beauty's youngest daughters!

"And on thy happy shore a temple still,
Of small and delicate proportion, keeps,
Upon a mild declivity of hill,
Its memory of thee; beneath it sweeps
The current's calmness; oft from out it leaps
The finny darter with the glittering scales,
Who dwells and revels in thy glassy deeps;
While, chance, some scattered water-lily sails
Down where the shallower wave still tells its bubbling tales."

By mountain and cataract, through this land of existing beauty and heroic memory, the pilgrim at length reaches Rome:—Rome, first Empress of the bodies, then of the souls, of all the civilized world, now owing its political, and, perhaps, even its religious existence to the half contemptuous pity of those nations whom she formerly held in thraldom—Rome is the very ground on which we should have loved to cope with Childe Harold

——"in those sullen fits,
For then he's full of matter."

Nor have we been disappointed in our wishes and expectations; for the voice of Marius could not sound more deep and solemn among the ruined arches of Carthage than the strains of the Pilgrim amid the broken shrines and fallen statues of her subduer. We can but touch partially upon these awful themes. The Palatine is thus described:—

"Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grown
Matted and mass'd together, hillocks heap'd
On what were chambers, arch crush'd, column strown
In fragments, chok'd up vaults, and frescos steep'd
In subterranean damps, where the owl peep'd,
Deeming it midnight:—Temples, baths, or halls?
Pronounce who can; for all that learning reap'd
From her research hath been, that these are walls,—
Behold the Imperial Mount! 'tis thus the mighty falls."

And thus the Egerian grottos, with a classical allusion to the complaint of Juvenal, that art in adorning them had destroyed their simplicity, are described in their state of decay by which that simplicity has been restored.

"The mosses of the fountain still are sprinkled
With thine Elysian water-drops; the face
Of thy cave-guarded spring, with years unwrinkled,
Reflects the meek-eyed genius of the place,
Whose green, wild margin now no more erase
Art's works; nor must the delicate waters sleep,
Prisoned in marble, bubbling from the base
Of the cleft statue, with a gentle leap
The rill runs o'er, and round, fern, flowers, and ivy creep."

The Coliseum is described in the midnight gloom of a cloudless Italian sky; its vast area recalls the bloody games of the Romans, and the poet has vied with the memorable sculptor who produced the Dying Gladiator,—superior in this, that equalling the artist in his faculty of impressing on the fancy the agonies, he can extend his power into incorporeal realms, and body forth not only the convulsed features and stiffened limbs, but the mental feelings and throes of the expiring swordsman.

"I see before me the Gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand,—his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his drooped head sinks gradually low,—
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now

The arena swims around him—he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch who won.

"He heard it, but he heeded not,—his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far away;
He reck'd not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay
There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother,—he, their sire,
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday,—
All this rush'd with his blood,—shall he expire
And unavenged?—Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!"

The Pantheon, the Mole of Hadrian, St. Peter's, whose vastness expands and "renders colossal" the mind of the gazer, the Vatican, with its treasures of ancient art, are all placed before us with the same picturesque, and rendered real by the same earnest and energetic force of Lord Byron's poetry, in which the numbers seem so little the work of art or study, that they rather appear the natural and unconstrained language in which the thoughts present themselves. The deep-toned melancholy of the poet's mind at length rests on a theme where it must long find a response in every British bosom—on the event which cut down the hope of our nation, sparing neither bush nor blossom, when we most expected to have seen it fulfilled. Liberal as we have been in quotation we cannot resist the opportunity of meeting Lord Byron on a public ground, in which his exquisite strains are an echo to our own thoughts, and where we can join without any of those mental protests which we are too often compelled to make against the correctness of his principles even when admitting the power of his language, and the beauty of his poetry.

"Hark! forth from the abyss a voice proceeds,
A long, low, distant murmur of dread sound,
Such as arises when a nation bleeds
With some deep and immedicable wound;
Through storm and darkness yawns the rending ground,
The gulf is thick with phantoms, but the chief
Seems royal still, though with her head discrowned,
And pale, but lovely, with maternal grief,
She clasps a babe, to whom her breast yields no relief.

"Scion of chiefs and monarchs, where art thou?
Fond hope of many nations, art thou dead?
Could not the grave forget thee, and lay low
Some less majestic, less beloved head?
In the sad midnight, while thy heart still bled,
The mother of a moment, o'er thy boy,

Death hush'd that pang for ever; with thee fled
The present happiness and promised joy
Which filled the imperial isles so full it seemed to cloy.

"Peasants bring forth in safety.—Can it be,
Oh thou that wert so happy, so adored!
Those who weep not for kings shall weep for thee,
And Freedom's heart, grown heavy, cease to hoard
Her many griefs for ONE; for she had pour'd
Her orisons for thee, and o'er thy head
Beheld her Iris.—Thou, too, lonely lord,
And desolate consort—vainly wert thou wed!
The husband of a year—the father of the dead!

"Of sackcloth was thy wedding-garment made;
Thy bridal's fruit is ashes: in the dust
The fair-haired daughter of the isles is laid,
The love of millions!—How we did intrust
Futurity to her! and, though it must
Darken above our bones, yet fondly deem'd
Our children should obey her child, and bless'd
Her and her hoped-for seed, whose promise seem'd
Like stars to shepherd's eyes—'twas but a meteor beam'd."

From the copious specimens which we have given, the reader will be enabled to judge how well the last part of this great poem has sustained Lord Byron's high reputation. Yet we think it possible to trace a marked difference, though none in the tone of thought and expression, betwixt this canto and the first three. There is less of passion, more of deep thought and sentiment, at once collected and general. The stream which in its earlier course bounds over cataracts and rages through narrow and rocky defiles, deepens, expands, and becomes less turbid as it rolls on, losing the aspect of terror and gaining that of sublimity. Eight years have passed between the appearance of the first volume and the present which concludes the work, a lapse of time which, joined with other circumstances, may have contributed somewhat to moderate the tone of Childe Harold's quarrel with the world, and, if not to reconcile him to his lot, to give him, at least, the firmness which endures it without loud complaint.—To return, however, to the proposition with which we opened our criticism, certain it is, that whether as Harold or as Lord Byron no author has ever fixed upon himself personally so intense a share of the public attention. His descriptions of present and existing scenes, however striking and beautiful, his recurrence to past actions, however important and however powerfully described, be-

come interesting chiefly from the tincture which they receive from the mind of the author. The grot of Egeria, the ruins of the Palatine, are but a theme for his musings, always deep and powerful though sometimes gloomy even to sullenness. This cast of solemnity may not perhaps be justly attributed to the native disposition of the author, which is reported to be as lively as, judging from this single poem at least, we might pronounce it to be grave. But our ideas of happiness are chiefly caught by reflection from the minds of others, and hence it may be observed that those enjoy the most uniform train of good spirits who are thinking much of others and little of themselves. The contemplation of our minds, however salutary for the purposes of self-examination and humiliation, must always be a solemn task, since the best will find enough for remorse, the wisest for regret, the most fortunate for sorrow. And to this influence more than to any natural disposition to melancholy, to the pain which necessarily follows this anatomizing of his own thoughts and feelings which is so decidedly and peculiarly the characteristic of the Pilgrimage, we are disposed in a great measure to ascribe that sombre tint which pervades the poem. The poetry which treats of the actions and sentiments of others may be grave or gay according to the light in which the author chooses to view his subject, but he who shall mine long and deeply for materials in his own bosom will encounter abysses at the depth of which he must necessarily tremble. This moral truth appears to us to afford, in a great measure, a key to the peculiar tone of Lord Byron. How then, will the reader ask, is our proposition to be reconciled to that which preceded it? If the necessary result of an inquiry into our own thoughts be the conviction that all is vanity and vexation of spirit, why should we object to a style of writing, whatever its consequences may be, which involves in it truths as certain as they are melancholy? If the study of our own enjoyments leads us to doubt the reality of all except the indisputable pleasures of sense, and inclines us therefore towards the Epicurean system,—it is nature, it may be said, and not the poet which urges us upon the fatal conclusion. But this is not so. Nature, when she created man a social being, gave him the capacity of drawing that happiness from his relations with the rest of his race, which he is doomed to seek in vain in his own bosom. These re-

lations cannot be the source of happiness to us if we despise or hate the kind with whom it is their office to unite us more closely. If the earth be a den of fools and knaves, from whom the man of genius differs by the more mercurial and exalted character of his intellect, it is natural that he should look down with pitiless scorn on creatures so inferior. But if, as we believe, each man, in his own degree possesses a portion of the etherial flame, however smothered by unfavourable circumstances, it is or should be enough to secure the most mean from the scorn of genius, as well as from the oppression of power, and such being the case, the relations which we hold with society, through all their gradations, are channels through which the better affections of the loftiest may, without degradation, extend themselves to the lowest.

Farther, it is not only our social connections which are assigned us, in order to qualify that contempt of mankind, which, too deeply indulged, tends only to intense selfishness; we have other and higher motives for enduring the lot of humanity—sorrow, and pain, and trouble—with patience of our own griefs, and commiseration for those of others. The wisest and the best of all ages have agreed, that our present life is a state of trial, not of enjoyment, and that we now suffer sorrow that we may hereafter be partakers of happiness. If this be true, and it has seldom been long, or at least ultimately, doubted by those who have turned their attention to so serious an investigation, other and worthier motives of action and endurance must necessarily occur to the mind than philosophy can teach, or human pride supply. It is not our intention to do more than merely indicate so ample a topic for consideration. But we cannot forbear to add, that the vanishing of Lord Byron's Pilgrim strongly reminded us of the close of another work, the delight of our childhood. Childe Harold, a prominent character in the first volume of the Pilgrimage, fades gradually from the scene like the spectre associate, who performed the first stages of his journey with a knight-errant, bearing all the appearance of a living man, but who lessened to the sight by degrees, and became at length totally invisible when they approached the cavern where his mortal remains were deposited.

"But where is he, the Pilgrim of my song,
The being who upheld it through the past?

Methinks he cometh late and tarries long.
He is no more—those breathings are his last;
His wanderings done, his visions ebbing fast,
And he himself as nothing. If he was
Aught but a phantasy, and could be class'd
With forms which live and suffer—let that pass—
His shadow fades away into destruction's mass."

In the corresponding passage of the "Tales of the Genii," Ridley, the amiable author or complier of the collection, expresses himself to the following purport,—for we have not the book at hand to do justice to his precise words,—"Reader, the Genii are no more, and Horam, but the phantom of my mind, fiction himself and fiction all that he seemed to write, speaks not again. But lament not their loss, since if desirous to see virtue guarded by miracles, Religion can display before you scenes tremendous, wonderful, and great, more worthy of your sight than aught that human fancy can conceive—the moral veil rent in twain and the Sun of Righteousness arising from the thick clouds of heathen darkness." In the sincere spirit of admiration for Lord Byron's talents, and regard for his character, which has dictated the rest of our criticism, we here close our analysis of Childe Harold.

Our task respecting Lord Byron's poetry is finished, when we have mentioned the subject, quoted passages of superior merit, or which their position renders most capable of being detached from the body of the poem. For the character of his style and versification once distinctly traced (and we have had repeated occasion to consider it), cannot again be dwelt on without repetition. The harmony of verse, and the power of numbers, nay, the selection and arrangement of expressions, are all so subordinate to the thought and sentiment, as to become comparatively light in the scale. His poetry is like the oratory which hurries the hearers along without permitting them to pause on its solecisms or singularities. Its general structure is bold, severe, and as it were Doric, admitting few ornaments but those immediately suggested by the glowing imagination of the author, rising and sinking with the tones of his enthusiasm, roughening into argument, or softening into the melody of feeling and sentiment, as if the language fit for either were alike at the command of the poet, and the numbers not only came uncalled, but arranged themselves with little care on his part into the varied modulation which the subject requires. Many

of the stanzas, considered separately from the rest, might be objected to as involved, harsh, and overflowing into each other beyond the usual license of the Spenserian stanza. But considering the various matter of which the poet had to treat—considering the monotony of a long-continued smoothness of sound, and accurate division of the sense according to the stanzas—considering also that the effect of the general harmony is, as in music, improved by the judicious introduction of discords wherewith it is contrasted, we cannot join with those who state this occasiona lharshness asan objection to Lord Byron's poetry. If the line sometimes "labours and the words move slow," it is in passages where the sense is correspondent to these laborious movements. A highly finished strain of versification resembles a dressed pleasure ground, elegant—even beautiful—but tame and insipid compared to the majesty and interest of a woodland chase, where scenes of natural loveliness are rendered sweeter and more interesting by the contrast of irregularity and wildness.

We have done with the poem; we have, however, yet a few words to say before we finally close our strictures.

To this canto, as to the former, notes are added, illustrative of the contents; and these, we are informed, are written by Mr. Hobhouse, the author of that facetious account of Buonaparte's reign of an hundred days, which it was our office last year to review. They are distinct and classical illustrations of the text, but contain, of course, many political sentiments of a class which have ceased to excite anger, or any feelings stronger than pity, and a sense of the weakness of humanity which, in all ages, has inclined even men of talents and cultivation to disgrace themselves, by the adoption of sentiments of which it is impossible they can have examined either the grounds or the consequences—whence the doctrines come, or whither they are tending. The mob of a corrupt metropolis, who vindicate the freedom of election by knocking out the brains of the candidate of whom they disapprove, act upon obvious and tangible principles; so do the Spenceans, Spa-fieldians, and Nottingham conspirators. That "seven halfpenny loaves should be sold for a penny,"—that "the three-hooped pot should have ten hoops,"—and that "the realm should be all in common,"—have been the watchwords of insurrection

among the vulgar, from Jack Straw's time to the present, and, if neither honest nor praiseworthy, are at least sufficiently plain and intelligible. But the frenzy which makes individuals of birth and education hold a language as if they could be willing to risk the destruction of their native country, and all the horrors of a civil war, is not so easily accounted for. To believe that these persons would accelerate a desolation in which they themselves directly, or through their nearest and dearest connections, must widely share, merely to remove an obnoxious minister, would be to form a hasty, and perhaps a false judgment of them. The truth seems to be, that the English, even those from whom better things might be expected, are born to be the dupes of jugglers and mountebanks in all professions. It is not only in physic that the names of our nobility and gentry decorate occasionally the list of cures to which the empiric appeals as attesting the force of his remedy. Religion in the last age, and politics in the present, have had their quacks, who substituted words for sense, and theoretical dogmata for the practice of every duty.—But whether in religion or politics, or physic, one general mark distinguishes the empiric, the patient is to be cured without interruption of business or pleasure,—the proselyte to be saved without reformation of the future, or repentance of the past,—the country to be made happy by an alteration in its political system; and all the vice and misery which luxury and poor's rates, a crowded population, and decayed morality can introduce into the community, to be removed by extending farther political rights to those who daily show that they require to be taught the purpose for which those they already enjoy were intrusted to them. That any one above the rank of an interested demagogue should teach this, is wonderful,—that any should believe it except the lowest of the vulgar, is more so,—but vanity makes as many dupes as folly.

If, however, these gentlemen will needs identify their own cause with that of their country's enemies, we can forgive them as losers, who have proverbial leave to pout. And when, in bitterness of spirit, they term the great, the glorious victory of Waterloo, the "carnage of St. Jean," we can forgive that too, since, trained in the school of revolutionary France, they must necessarily abhor those

"whose art was of such power
It could control their dam's God Setebos,
And make a vassal of him."—

From the dismal denunciations which Lord Byron, acting more upon his feeling than his judgment, has made against our country, although

"Were ne'er prophetic sounds so full of wo,"

we entertain no fears—none whatever.—

At home the noble author may hear of better things than "a permanent army and a suspended Habeas Corpus"—he may hear of an improving revenue and increasing public prosperity. And while he continues abroad he may haply call to mind, that the Pilgrim, whom eight years since, the universal domination of France compelled to wander into distant and barbarous countries, is *now* at liberty to travel where he pleases, certain that there is not a corner of the civilized world where his title of Englishman will not ensure him a favourable and respectful reception.

AMADIS OF GAUL.*

[Edinburgh Review, October, 1803.]

The fame of *Amadis de Gaul* has reached to the present day, and has indeed become almost provincial in most languages of Europe. But this distinction has been attained rather in a mortifying manner: for the hero seems much less indebted for his present renown to his historians, Lobeira, Montalvo, and Herberay, than to Cervantes, who selected their labours, as one of the best known books of chivalry, and therefore the most prominent object for his ridicule. In this case, as in many others, the renown of the victor has carried down to posterity the memory of the vanquished; and, excepting the few students of black letter, we believe no reader is acquainted with *Amadis de Gaul*, otherwise than as the prototype of *Don Quixote de la Mancha*. But the ancient knight seems now in a fair way of being rescued from this degrading state of notoriety, and of once more resuming a claim to public notice upon his own proper merits; having, with singular good fortune, engaged in his cause two such authors as Mr. Southey and Mr. Rose. As the subject of the two articles before us, is in fact the same, we shall adopt the prose version of Mr. Southey, as forming the fullest text for the general commentaries which we have to offer; reserving till the conclusion, the particular remarks which occur to us upon Mr. Rose's poem.

The earliest copy of *Amadis de Gaul*, now known to exist, is the Spanish edition of Garcia Ordognez de Montalvo, which is used by Mr. Southey in his translation. Montalvo

* *Amadis de Gaul:* By Vasco Lobeira. *From the Spanish version of Garciordonez de Montalvo.* By Robert Southey. *And Amadis de Gaul: A poem in Three Books. Freely translated from the French of* Nicolas de Herberay, by William Stewart Rose.

professes, in general terms, to have revised and corrected this celebrated work from the ancient authorities. He is supposed principally to have used the version of Vasco de Lobeira, a Portuguese knight, who died in the beginning of the 15th century. But a dispute has arisen, whether even Lobeira can justly claim the merit of being the original author of this famous and interesting romance. Nicolas de Herberay, who translated Montalvo's work into French in 1575, asserts positively, that it was originally written in that language; and adds this remarkable passage: "*J'en ay trouvé encores quelques reste d'un vieil livre escrit à la main en langage Picard, sur lequel j'estime que les Espagnols ont fait leur traduction, non pas de tout suyvant le vrai original, comme l'on pourra veoir par cesluy, car ilz en ont obmis en aucuns endroits et augmenté aux autres.*" Mr. Southey, however, setting totally aside the evidence of Herberay, as well as of Monsieur de Tressan, who also affirms the existence of a Picard original of *Amadis*, is decidedly of opinion, that Vasco de Lobeira was the original author. It is with some hesitation that we venture to differ from Mr. Southey, knowing, as we well know, that his acquaintance with the Portuguese literature entitles him to considerable deference in such an argument: yet, viewing the matter on the proofs he has produced, and considering also the general history and progress of romantic composition, we incline strongly to think with Mr. Rose, that the story of *Amadis* is originally of French extraction.

The earliest tales of romance which are known to us, are uniformly in verse; and this was very natural; for they were in a great measure the composition of the minstrels, who gained their livelihood by chanting and reciting them. This is peculiarly true of the French minstrels, as appears from the well-known quotation of Du Cange from the Romance of *Du Guesclin*, where the champions of romantic fiction are enumerated as the subject of their lays.

> ———————————" ROLLANS
> Les quatre fils HAIMON, et CHARLON li plus grans
> Li dus LIONS DE BOURGES, et GULON DE CONNANS
> PERCEVAL LI GALOIS, LANCELOT, ET TRISTANS
> ALEXANDRE, ARTUS, GODEFROI li sachans
> De quoy cils menestriers font les noble romans."

There are but very few prose books of chivalry in the

world, which are not either still extant, or are at least known to have existed originally in the form of metrical romances. The very name by which such compositions are distinguished, is derived from the *romance* or corrupted Latin employed by the minstrels, and long signified any history or fable narrated in vulgar poetry. It would be almost endless to cite examples of this proposition. The tales of Arthur and his Round Table, by far the most fertile source of the romances of chivalry, are all known to have existed as metrical compositions long before the publication of the prose folios on the same subject. These poems the minstrels used to chant at solemn festivals; nor was it till the decay of that extraordinary profession that romances in prose were substituted for their lays. The invention of printing hastened the declension of poetical romance. The sort of poetry employed by the minstrels, differed only from prose in being more easily retained by the memory; but when copies were readily and cheaply multiplied by means of the press, the exertion of recollection became unnecessary.

As early as the fifteenth century, numerous prose versions of the most celebrated romances were executed in France and England, which were printed in the course of the sixteenth. These works are now become extremely rare. Mr. Southey attributes this to their great popularity. But if their popularity lasted, as he supposes, till they were worn out by repeated perusal, the printers would have found their advantage in supplying the public with new editions. The truth is, that the editions first published of these expensive folio romances were very small. Abridgements and extracts served the purpose of the vulgar. Meanwhile, the taste of the great took another turn; and the books of chivalry disappeared, in consequence of the neglect and indifference of their owners. More than a century elapsed betwixt their being read for amusement, and sought for as curiosities; and such a lapse of time would render any work scarce, were the editions as numerous as those of the Pilgrim's Progress.

To return to our subject—It appears highly probable to us, that Lobeira's prose Amadis was preceded by a metrical romance, according to the general progress which we observe in the history of similar productions.

Another general remark authorizes the same conclusion. It is well known that the romances of the middle ages were not announced to the hearers as works of mere imagination. On the contrary, they were always affirmed by the narrators to be matter of historical fact; nor was this disputed by the simplicity of the audience. The gallant knights and lovely dames, for whose delight these romances were composed and sung, were neither shocked by the incongruities of the work, nor the marvellous turn of the adventures. Some old tradition was adopted for the subject of the tale; favourite and well-known names were introduced. An air of authenticity was thus obtained; the prejudices of the audience conciliated; and the feudal baron believed as firmly in the exploits of Roland and Oliver, as a sturdy Celt of our day in the equally sophisticated poems of Ossian.—Hence, the grand sources of romantic fiction have been traced to the Brut of Maister Wace, himself a translator of Geoffrey of Monmouth, who put into form the traditions of the bards of Wales and Armorica; to the fabulous history of Turpin, from which sprung the numerous romances of Charlemagne and his twelve Peers; and finally to the siege of Troy, as narrated by Dares Phrygius, and to the exploits of Alexander. Other and later heroes became also the subject of Romance. Such were William of Orange, called *Short-nose*, Richard of Normandy, Ralph Blundeville, Earl of Chester, Richard Cœur de Lion, Robert the Bruce, Bertrand du Guesclin, &c. &c. The barons also, before whom these tales were recited, were often flattered by a fabulous genealogy which deduced their pedigree from some hero of the story. A peer of England, the Earl of Oxford, if we recollect aright, conceited himself to be descended of the doughty Knight of the Swan; and, what is somewhat to our present purpose, the French family of Bonneau deduce their pedigree from Dariolette, the complaisant confidant of Elisene, mother to Amadis.—*See Mr. Rose's* work, p. 52.

A Portuguese minstrel would therefore have erred grossly in choosing for his subject a palpable and absolute fiction, in which he could derive no favour from the partialities and preconceived opinions of those whose applause he was ambitious to gain. But if we suppose Amadis to have been the exclusive composition of Lobeira, we must suppose him to have invented a story, not only altogether unconnected

with the history of his own country, but identified with the real or fabulous history of France, which was then the ally of Castile, and the mortal foe of Portugal. The difficulty is at once removed, if we allow that author to have adopted from the French minstrels a tale of their country, founded probably upon some ancient and vague tradition, in the same manner as they themselves had borrowed from the British bards, and Geoffrey of Monmouth, their translator, the slender foundation upon which they erected the voluminous and splendid history of Arthur, and the doughty chivalry of his Round Table. This is the more probable, as we actually find Amadis enumerated among other heroes of French Romance mentioned in an ancient collection of stories, called *Cursor Mundi*, translated from the French into English metre.

> "Men lykyn jestis for to here,
> And Romans rede in diverse manere,
> Of Alexandre the conquerour;
> Of Julius Cæsar the emperour;
> Of Greece and Troy the strong stryfe;
> There many a man lost his lyf;
> Of Brut, that baron bold of hond,
> The first conquerour of Englond;
> Of Kyng Artour, that was so ryche,
> Was non in his tyme so ilyche;
> Of wonders that among his knights fell,
> And auntyrs deden as men her telle:
> As Gaweyn and othir full abylle,
> Which that kept the round tabyll;
> Hou King Charles and Rowland fawghte
> With Sarazins nold thei be cawght;
> Of Tristram and Ysoude the swete,
> Hou thei with love first gan mete;
> Of King John and of Isenbras;
> Of Ydoine and *Amadas*."
>
> WARTON'S *History of Poetry*.

If the hero last mentioned be really Amadis de Gaul, the question as to the existence of a French or Picard history of his exploits, is fairly put to rest. For, not to mention that the date of the poem above quoted is at least coeval with Vasco de Lobeira, it is admitted, that no French translation of the Portuguese work was made till that of Herberay in 1575; and, consequently, the author of the *Cursor Mundi* must have alluded to a French original, altogether independent of Lobeira's work.

Mr. Southey himself, with the laudable impartiality of an editor more attached to truth than system, has produced the evidence of one Portuguese author, who says that *Pedro* de Lobeira translated the history of *Amadis de Gaul* from the French language, at the instance of the Infant Don Pedro. *Agiologio Lusitano*, tom. i, p. 480.—Now, although this author *has* made a mistake, in calling Lobeira *Pedro*, instead of *Vasco*, yet his authority at least proves that there existed, even in Portugal, some tradition that *Amadis* had originally been composed in French, although the authors of that country have, with natural partiality, endeavoured to vindicate Lobeira's title to the fame of an original author.* One singular circumstance tends to corroborate what is stated in the *Agiologio*. It is certain that the work was executed under the inspection of an Infant of Portugal; for Montalvo expressly states, that at the instance of this high personage, an alteration, of a very peculiar nature, was made in the story. The passage, which is curious in more respects than one, is thus rendered by Mr. Southey.

"At the end of the 41st chapter, it is said that Briolania would have given herself and her kingdom to Amadis; but he told her right loyally, how he was another's. In the Spanish version, ff. 72, this passage follows—"But though the Infante Don Alfonso of Portugal, having pity upon this fair damsel, ordered it to be set down after another manner, that was what was his good pleasure, *and not what actually was written of their loves;* and they relate that history of these loves, thus, though, with more reason, faith is to be given to what we before said:—Briolania, being restored to her kingdom, and enjoying the company of Amadis and Agrayes, persisted in her love; and, seeing no way whereby she could accomplish her mortal desires, she spake very secretly with the damsel, to whom Amadis, and Galaor, and Agrayes, had each promised a boon, if she would guide Don Galaor where he might find the Knight of the Forest. This damsel was now returned, and to her she disclosed her mind, and besought her, with many tears, to advise some remedy for that strong passion. The damsel then, in pity to her lady, demanded, as the performance of his promise, from Amadis, that he should not go out of a certain tower till he had a son or a daughter by Briolania; and they say, that,

* The evidence of Nicola Antonia, in the *Vetus Hispanæ Bibliotheca*, is, as remarked by Mr. Rose, extremely inconclusive. He adds *ut fama est* to his affirmation that Lobeira was the original author of *Amadis*, and quotes the equally cautious expression of Antonius Augustinus—"Quarum fabularum primum fuisse auctorem Vascum Lobeiram *Lusitani jactant*."—Amadis de Gaule, a Poem. Introd. p. vi.

upon this, Amadis went into the tower, because he would not break his word; and there, because he would not consent to Briolania's desires, he remained, losing both his appetite and his sleep, till his life was in great danger. This being known in the court of King Lisuarte, his Lady Oriana, that she might not lose him, sent and commanded him to grant the damsel's desire; and he having this command, and considering that by no other means could he recover his liberty, or keep his word, took that fair Queen for his leman, and had by her a son and a daughter at one birth. But it was not so, unless Briolania, seeing how Amadis was drawing nigh to death in the tower, told the damsel to release him of his promise, if he would only remain till Don Galaor was arrived; doing thus, that she might so long enjoy the sight of the fair and famous knight, whom, when she did not behold, she thought herself in great darkness. This carries with it more reason why it should be believed; because this fair Queen was afterwards married to Don Galaor, as the fourth book relates."—*Introd.* p. vii.

It seems to us clear, from this singular passage, that the work upon which Lobeira was busied, under the auspices of the Infant Don Alfonso, or what Infant soever was his patron, must necessarily have been a translation, more or less free, from some ancient authority. If Amadis was the mere creature of Lobeira's fancy the author might no doubt be unwilling, in compliance wilh the whimsical compassion of his patron for the fair Briolania, to violate the image of ideal perfection pictured in his hero, to which fidelity was so necessary an attribute; but he could in no sense be said to interpolate *what actually was written*, unless he derived his story from some authority, independent of the resources of his own imagination.

We do not think it necessary to enter into the question, how far the good taste and high spirit displayed in this romance, entitle us to ascribe it exclusively to the French. The modest assurance with which Monsieur de Tressan advances the claim of his nation upon this ground, is, as Mr. Southey has justly observed, a truly French argument. We have not, however, that very high opinion of the Portuguese character, about the conclusion of the fourteenth century, which has been adopted by Mr. Southey. We recollect that the "good and loyal Portuguese, who fought at Aljubarrota for King Joam of good memory," were indebted for that victory to Northberry and Hartfell, the English mercenaries, who arranged their host in so strong a position; to the headlong impetuosity of the Gascon, Berneze, and French

adventurers, who composed the van of the Spanish army; and to the jealousy or cowardice of the Castilians, who refused to support their auxiliaries; so that little of the fame of that memorable day can in truth be imputed to the courage of the Portuguese. At that time, indeed, Castile and Portugal were rather the stages whereon foreigners exercised their courage in prize-fighting, than theatres for the display of national valour. Edward the Black Prince, John of Gaunt, John Chandos, and Sir Edward Knowles, fought in those countries, against Bertram of Clesquy and the flower of French chivalry; but we hear little of the prowess of the inhabitants themselves. Such an insolent superiority was exercised by the English and Gascons, who came to the assistance of the King of Portugal, that, upon occasion of discontent, they erected the pennon of St. George as a signal of revolt; elected Sir John Soltier, a natural son of the Black Prince, to be their captain; and proclaimed themselves, *friends to God, and enemies to all the world;* nor had the king any other mode of saving his country from pillage, than by complying with their demands. Indeed, it is more than probable, that both Portugal and Spain would have fallen under the dominion of England, if the port wine, which now agrees so well with the constitution of our southern brethern, had been equally congenial to that of their martial ancestors: "but the Englyshmen founde the wynes there so strong, hot and brinning, that it corrupted their heads, and dried their bowelles, and brente their lightes and lyvers; and they had no remedy; for they could fynde but lytill water to tempre their wynes, nor to refresh them; which was contrary to their natures; for Englyshmen, in their own countries, are sweetly nourished; and there they were brent both within and without" [*Froissart*]. To such circumstances was Portugal occasionally indebted to safety, at the hands of her too dangerous allies. It seems to us more than probable, that, during these wars, the French or Picard original of Amadis was acquired by Lobeira from some minstrel, attendant upon the numerous Breton and Gascon knights who followed the banners of the Earl of Cambridge, or the Duke of Lancaster; for to Brittany or Acquitaine we conceive the original ought to be referred.

But while we cannot believe, against the concurring testimony of Herberay and Tressan, as well as against the

usual progress of romantic composition, that Amadis de Gaul is, from beginning to end, the invention of Lobeira; yet, we conceive enough may safely be ascribed to him, to warrant the praises bestowed on him by Mr. Southey, and perhaps to entitle him to the name of an original author. We do not indeed know the precise nature of Lobeira's work, nor what additions have been made to it by Montalvo; but it is easy to conceive that it must have been something very different from the Picard original. In making some remarks on the style and structure of Amadis, we shall endeavour to contrast them with those of the earlier romance.

The metrical romances differed in many most material particulars from the prose romances by which they were superseded. The former partook of the character of the rhapsodists, by whom they were usually composed, and always sung. It was vain to expect from the ignorant minstrels, or those who wrote for them, a well-connected history; nor, if they had been capable of such a refined composition, could its beauties have been relished by their audience, to whom they had seldom time to sing above one or two of the adventures contained in a long romance. Their narration was therefore rambling and desultory. One adventure followed another, without much visible connection; the only object of the author being, to produce such detached pieces as might interest during the time of recitation, without any regard to the unity of the composition. Thus, in many cases, the only connection seems to arise from the same hero figuring in all the adventures, which are otherwise as much detached from each other, as the scenes in the box of a showman. But when a book was substituted for the minstrel's song, when the adventures of a *preux chevalier* were no longer listened to by starts, amid the roar of convivial festivity, but furnished the amusement of the closet, and that in so permanent a shape, that the student might turn back to resume the connections which had escaped him; it became the study of the author to give a greater appearance of uniformity to his work. As an arrangement, in which all the incidents should seem to conduce to one general end, must soon have become a merit with the reader; it became, necessarily, to the author, a worthy object of attainment. Hence, in the best of our prose romances, and particularly in *Amadis de Gaul*, a combined

and regular progress of the story may be discovered; whereas the metrical romances present, with a few exceptions, a suite of unconnected adventures, often striking and splendid indeed in themselves, but appearing rather an assemblage of loose materials for a history, than a history itself. But the advantage, thus gained by the prose romances, was often lost, by carrying too far the principle on which it was grounded. Having once regularly completed a story, good taste and judgment required them to stop, and choose for their future labours some subject unconnected with what was already perfect. But this was not the genius of the age. When they had secured an interesting set of characters, the authors could not resist the temptation of bringing them again upon the stage; and hence, the endless continuations with which Amadis and the other romances of that class, were saddled, and of which Mr. Southey complains with so much justice. Only four books of Amadis are genuine. The remaining twenty are an interpolation, containing the history of his descendants, in all respects greatly inferior to the original.

In another point of view, it appears to us not quite clear that the prose romancers obtained any superiority over their poetical predecessors. The rude poetry of the minstrels was no doubt frequently rambling and diffusive; partaking, in short, of those faults which naturally attach to unpremeditated composition; but we doubt greatly, whether the studied and affected ornaments of the prose romance are not more tedious and intolerable than the rhapsodies of the minstrels. Mr. Southey, in his translation of Amadis, has, with due attention to modern taste, shortened the long speeches of the lovers, and simplified many of their high-flown compliments. On the other hand, the custom of interweaving the history with little descriptive sketches, which, in many instances, were very beautiful, was dropt by the prose narrators, as an unnecessary interruption to the continuation of the story. We allude to such passages as the following, which are introductions to the *Fyttes* of the unpublished romance of Merlin. The ancient orthography is altered, for the sake of modern readers.

> "In the time of winter *along** it is
> The fowls lesen their bliss,
> The leaves fallen off the tree,
> Rain rushes along the countrey;

* *Tedious.*

Maidens lose their lovely hew,
But still they loven that be true.

. . . .

In May is merry time swithe,
Fowls in wood they make them blithe,
Swains 'gin on justing ride,
Maidens dressen them with pride.

. . . .

Merry it is in the month of June,
When fennel hangeth abroad in town;
Violet and roses flower
Groweth then on maidens bower;
The sun is hot, the day is long;
The small birds maketh merry song."

Of such passages, which serve to relieve the heaviness of the perpetually recurring fight and tournament, the prose romance affords us no example. The ornaments which it presents are those of studied description, every word of which is laboured, as applicable to the precise scene which is described, without expressing or exciting any general sensibility of the beauties of nature. We may take, as no unfavourable instance, the account of the tower and gardens constructed by Apollidon in the Firm Island.

"In that tower were nine apartments, three on a floor, and though some part was the work of skilful artists, the rest was wrought by the skill and science of Apollidon himself, so wonderously, that no man in the world could rightly value, nor even understand its exceeding rarity. And because it would be long to describe it all at length, I shall only say, that the tower stood in the midst of a garden, surrounded with a wall of goodly stone and mortar; and the garden was the goodliest that might be seen, by reason of its trees and herbs, and fountains of sweet water. Of those trees, many were hung with fruit the whole year through, and others bore flowers; and round about the garden by the walls, were covered walks, with golden trellis-work, through which might all that pleasant greenness be seen. The ground was covered with stones, some clear as the crystal, others coloured like rubies and other precious stones, the which Apollidon had procured from certain islands in the East, where jewels, gold, and other rare things are produced, by reason of the great heat of the sun continually acting. These islands are uninhabited, save only by wild-beasts; and, for fear of those beasts, no man durst ever set foot thereon, till Apollidon, by his cunning, wrought such spells, that it became safe to enter there; and then the neighbouring people, being assured of this, took advantage thereof, and ventured there also; and thus the world became stocked with sundry things which it had never before known. To the four sides of the tower, water was brought from the neighbouring mountains

by metal pipes, and collected into four fountains; and the water spouted so high from the golden pillars, and through the mouths of animals, that is was easy to reach it from the windows of the first story; for it was caught in golden basons wrought on the pillars; and by those fountains was the whole garden watered."—*Amadis*, vol. iv, p. 13.

From comparing the slight, extemporary, and natural landscape-sketches of the ancient minstrel, with the laboured and minute picture of Lobeira or Montalvo, the reader may derive some idea of the marked difference between the style of the more ancient tales of chivalry, and those by which they were succeeded. The description of the minstrel appears almost as involuntary as it is picturesque, and is enlivened by the introduction of the birds, the dames, and the gallant knights. The prose author seems to have sat down to describe Apollidon's tower, his water-pipes, Kensington gravel-walks, and Dutch trellis, with a sort of *malice prepense* against his reader's patience; and his account exactly resembles the plan and elevation of a capability-man or architect. The following contrast regards a scene of a more animated nature, and of all others, that which occurs most frequently in romance.

"Alexander made a cry hardi,
'Ore tost, aby, aby.'
Then the knights of Achaye
Justed with them of Arabye;
Egypt justed with them of Tyre,
Simple knights with rich syre.
There ne was forgift, ne forbearing,
Between Vavasour or King.
Before men mighten and behind,
Contest seek, and contest find.
With Persians fought the Gregois;
There was cry, and great *hontois;*
There might men find his peer;
There lose many his destrier;* — * *War-horse.*
There was quicke in little thrawe;
Many gentil knight y-slawe;
Many arm, many heavod,
Sone from the body reaved;
Many gentle ladye
There lost quickly her *ami;*
There was many y-maimed:
Many fair pensill bebledde:
There were swords liklaking;* — * *Clashing.*
There were speres in blood bathing:
Both Kings there, sans doute,
Y-dashed in with all their route;

Many lands, both near and far,
Lost their Lords in this war.
Earth quaked of their riding;
The weather thicken'd of their crying;
The blood of them that were y-slawe,
Ran by floods to the lawe."

In this description, as in the former, may be traced the spirit of the poet, warming as he advanced in narration; from the encountering of the hosts, when war, like death, levelled all distinction betwixt the vassal and monarch, to the fall of the loves of ladies and the lords of domain, to the bloody banners, clashing swords and gory lances, until the ground shook under the charge of the combatants, the air was darkened at their shouts, and the blood of the dying poured like torrents into the valley. The following is the description of the grand battle betwixt Lisuarte and Aravigo, in which the timely assistance of Amadis, with his father, gave the victory to the father of Orianna:—

"Presently (King Lisuarte) went down the side of the mountain into the plain; and as it was now upon that hour when the sun was rising, it shone upon their arms; and they appeared so well disposed, that their enemies, who had before held them as nothing, now thought of them otherwise. In this array, which you have heard, they moved slowly over the field one against the other.

"At this season, King Perion, with his sons Amadis and Florestan, entered the plain upon their goodly steeds, and with their arms of the serpents, which shone brightly in the sun; and they rode on to place themselves between the two armies, brandishing their spears, whose points were so polished and clear that they glittered like stars; and the father went between his sons. Much were they admired by both parts, and each would willingly have had them on his side; but no one knew whom they came to aid, nor who they were. They, seeing that the hoste of Brian of Monjuste was about to join battle, put spurs to their horses, and rode up near to his banner; then set themselves against King Targadan, who came against him. Glad was Don Brian of their help, though he knew them not; but they, when they saw that it was time, rode to attack the host of King Targadan so fiercely that all were astonished. In that encounter, King Perion struck that other king so hardly, that a part of the spear soon entered his breast, and he fell. Amadis smote Abdasian the Fierce, so that armour nothing profited him, but the lance passed through from side to side, and he fell like a dead man. Don Florestan drove Carduel, saddle and man, under the horse's feet; these three being the bravest of that battalion that had come forwards to combat the Knights of the Serpents. Then laid they hand to sword, and passed through the first squadron, felling all before them, and charged the second; and when they were thus between both, there was to be seen what mar-

vellous feats of prowess they wrought with their swords; such, that none did like them on either side; and they had now under their horses more than ten knights whom they had smitten down. But when their enemies saw that they were no more than three, they charged them on all sides, laying on such heavy blows that the aid of Don Brian was full needful, who came up with his Spaniards, a brave people and well horsed, and rode among the enemy, slaying and felling them, though his own men fell also; so that the Knights of the Serpents were succoured, and the enemy so handled, that they perforce gave back upon the third battalion. Then there was a great press, and a great danger for all, and many knights died upon either side; but what King Perion and his sons did there cannot be expressed. Such was the uproar and confusion, that King Aravigo feared lest his own men, who had given ground, should make the others fly; and he called aloud to Arcalaus, to advance with all the battalions, and attack in one body. This presently he did, and King Aravigo with him; but without delay King Lisuarte did the same; so that the whole battle was now joined: and such was the clang of strokes, and the cry and noise of horsemen, that the earth trembled, and the valleys rung again." —Vol. iii, p. 90.

In this last quotation, as in the former, the inferiority of Lobeira is sufficiently manifest; though his description is by no means void of spirit. It cannot be alleged that this is owing to the poetry; for no modern will attribute much to the force of the minstrel's numbers; and the author of Amadis is far from disclaiming the use of poetical ornament. The difference arises from the disposition to specification, and to exchange general effect for minute description, which we have already remarked as an attribute of the prose romance.

The most curious part, however, of this curious subject, respects the change in manners which appears to have taken place about the middle of the 14th century, when what we now call the *Spirit of Chivalry* seems to have shone forth with the most brilliant lustre. In the older romances, we look in vain for the delicacy which, according to Burke, robbed vice of half its evil, by depriving it of all its grossness. The tales of the older metrical romancers, founded frequently on fact, and always narrated in a coarse and downright style, excite feelings sometimes ludicrous, and often disgusting; and in fact can only be excelled by the unparalleled *fabliaux* published by Barbazan, which although professedly written to be recited to noble knights and dames, exhibit a nakedness, not only in the description, but in the turn of the story, which would now banish them even from a bagnio, unless of the very lowest order. The ladies in metrical romances,

not only make the first advances on all occasions, but with a degree of vivacity, copied it would seem from the worthy spouse of Potiphar. For example, a certain knight called Sir Amis, having declined the proffered favours of the Lady Belisaunt, pleading his allegiance to his liege lord, receives from her the following sentimental rebuke:

> "That merry maiden of great renown
> Answered, 'Sir Knight, thou hast no *crown*—*
> For God that bought thee dear,
> Whether art thou priest or parson,
> Other art thou monk, other canon,
> That preachest me thus here?
>
> "'Thou never shouldst have been a knight,
> To go amongst maidens bright;
> Thou shouldst have been a frere:
> He that learned thee thus to preach,
> The devil of hell I him biteche,
> My brother though he were.'"
>
> *Amis & Amelion.*

As the damsels were urgent in their demands, the knights of these more early ages were often brutally obstinate in their refusal; and instead of the gentle denial which the love-sick Briolania received from the courteous Amadis, they were too apt to exclaim like Bevis of Hampton, when invited to a rendezvous by the fair Josiana, a Saracen princess—

> "Forth the knights go can;
> To Bevis' chamber they came anon,
> And prayed as he was gentleman,
> Come speak with Josian.
> Bevis stoutly in this stound
> Haf up his head from the ground
> . . . .
> And said, 'If ye ne were messagers,
> I should ye slay, ye lossengers;
> I ne will rise one foot fro' grounde
> For to speake with an heathen hounde;
> She is a hound, also be ye,
> Out of my chamber swith ye flee.'"

All this coarseness, in word and deed, was effectually banished from the romances of chivalry which were composed subsequent to 1350. Sentiment had begun to enter into these fictions, not casually, or from the peculiar delicacy of an individual author, but as a necessary qualification of

* Art not shaved like a monk

the heroes and heroines whose loves occupied their ponderous folios.

Of this refinement we find many instances in Amadis. Balays of Corsante being repulsed by a damsel, explains his sentiments upon such points.

"My good lady," Balays answered, "think no more of what I said: it becomes knights to serve damsels, and to woo their love, and becomes them to deny, as you have done; and albeit, at the first, we think it much to obtain of them what we desire, yet when wisely and discreetly they resist our inordinate appetites, keeping that without which they are worthy of no praise, they be even of ourselves more reverenced and commended."

Notwithstanding this favourable alteration in their tone, the reader is not to understand that the morality of these writings was in fact very materially amended; for at no period was the age of chivalry distinguished for female virtue. Those who have supposed the contrary, have never opened a romance written before the tomes of Calprenede, and Scudery, and judge of Queen Guenever, Iscult, and Oriana, by what they find there recorded of Mandane and Cassandra. But the genuine prose romances of chivalry, although less gross in language and circumstance, contain as little matter for edification as the tales of the minstrels, to which they succeeded. Lancelot du Lac is the adulterous lover of Guenever, the wife of his friend and sovereign; and Tristram de Lionel the incestuous seducer of his uncle's spouse, as well in the prose folios of Rusticien de Puise, and the Knight of the Castle of Gast, as in the rhimes of Chretien de Troyes and Thomas of Erceldoune. Nor did the tales of a more modern date turn upon circumstances more correct: witness the history of the Petit Iehan de Saintré, and many others. Of Amadis, in particular, Mr. Southey has observed, that "all the first-born children are illegitimate," because "the hero must be every way irresistible." The same observation applies to most romances of chivalry; so that one would be tempted to suppose that the damsels of those days, doomed frequently to wander through lonely woods infested by robbers, giants, and caitiffs of every description, were so far from trusting, like the lady in Comus, to the magic power of true virginity, that they hastened to confer upon some faithful knight a treasure so very precarious, while it was yet their own to bestow. But the

modern man of gallantry will be surprised to hear, that this by no means diminished either the zeal or duty of the lover, who had thus attained the summit of his hopes. On the contrary, unless in the case of here and there a Don Galaor, who is always painted as a subaltern character, a *preux chevalier* was bound, not only to maintain the honour of the lady thus deposited in his custody, but to observe towards her the fidelity and respect of religious observance.* Every one knows how long Sir Lancelot had enjoyed the favours of Queen Guenever; and yet that scrupulous knight went distracted, and remained so till he was healed by the Sangreal, merely because by enchantment he was brought to the bed of the lovely Dame Elaine. As for Amadis, the bare suspicion which Oriana conceived of his infidelity, occasioned his doing penance on the Poor Rock in a manner unequalled, unless by the desolate knight who averred himself to have retired to a cavern, where he "used for his bed mosse, for his candle mosse, for his covering mosse, and, unless now and then a few coals, mosse for his meat; a dry food, God wot, and a fresh; but so moistened with wet tears, and so salte, that it was hard to conjecture whether it was better to feed or fast."†

In short, the love of the knights-errant was like their laws of honour, altogether beyond the common strain of feeling, as well as incapable of being measured by the standard of religion and morality. Their rules of honour have in some degree survived the fate of their order; and we have yet fatal instances of bloodshed for "a word of reproach," a "bratchet hound," or such other causes of duel as figure in the tales of the Table Round. But the love which was not only fostered, but imposed as a solemn duty by the laws of chivalry, is now only to be traced in such a romance as is before us. It subsisted, as we have seen, independent of maidenly chastity and conjugal fidelity; and its source perhaps may be traced to a remote period of antiquity Tacitus has noticed the respect in which women were held among the German tribes. The ladies of Britain were

* The Cicesbei of Italy derive their order from the days of chivalry. The reader is referred to the *Mèmoires de Grammont* for an account of the duties expected from them.

† Progresses of Queen Elizabeth, vol. ii, p. 136.

indulged with the privilege of a plurality of husbands; and those of Scandinavia, although they were limited to one, might divorce him at their pleasure.* This sort of supremacy, the ladies appear at all times to have exercised over the descendants of the Northern tribes. It is true, as already mentioned, the homage paid their charms by the earlier heroes of chivalry, was interrupted and sullied by the roughness of their manners and expressions. To reverse the complaint of the Knight of the Burning Pestle, "one whom Amadis had styled courteous damsel, Bevis would have called heathen hound;" but the duty of obeying the hests, and fighting for the honour of a lady, was indispensable even among the earliest and rudest sons of chivalry. In the course of the fourteenth century, this was sublimated and refined to the most extravagant degree; so that the secret, inviolable, and romantic attachment of Amadis to Oriana might be easily paralleled by similar passages from real history. Even the zeal of devotion gave way to this all devouring sentiment; and very religious indeed must the knight have been, who had, as was predicted of Esplandian, God upon his *right* hand, and his lady upon his *left*.

We cannot leave this part of our subject, without bestowing our warm commendations on Mr. Southey, for disdaining to follow Tressan and Herberay, in the impure descriptions and obcenities which they have much oftener introduced, than found, in the Spanish original. Tressan in particular, whose talents and taste made it totally inexcusable, dwells with infinitely higher gust upon the gallantries of Don Galaor, than upon the love of Amadis; and describes them with that vicious and perverted love of obscenity, which Mr. Southey so justly reprobates, as "peculiarly and characteristically the disgrace of French literature." May a practice, so ominous to the morals and manly virtue of our nation, long

* A curious instance may be found in *Eyrbiggia-Saga*. Thordisa, the wife of Borko, an Icelandic chief, attempted to stab one Eyulf Grae, the friend and guest of her husband. Borko interfering, administered to his wife some domestic chastisement. But mark the consequence. "When Borko departed from Helgafels, Thordisa, standing before the door of the house, called witnesses to bear testimony that she divorced her husband Borko; assigning for a cause, that he had struck her, and that she would no longer submit to such injuries. Thereupon the household goods were divided betwixt them."—[See *ante*, vol. v, pp. 363-5.]

be a stranger to the writings of those who profess to afford to Britons information or pleasure!

The manners described in *Amadis de Gaul* are, in other respects, strictly feudal and chivalrous. The points of right and honour which are discussed; the rules of combat and of truce; the high and rigid adherence to knightly faith, are all features of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. What may appear to the modern reader, one of the most strained instances of the latter, is the conduct of King Lisuarte in the fourth book, to whom an old man presents a crown and mantle, under the condition, that he shall restore them at his *cour plenière*, or grant the suppliant a boon in their stead. On the appointed day, the crown and mantle having been conveyed out of Lisuarte's custody by enchantment, the boon demanded by the stranger in lieu is, that Oriana, the daughter of Lisuarte, should be delivered up to him.

"Lisuarte exclaimed, 'Ah, knight, thou hast asked a great thing;' and all who were present were greatly grieved. But the King, who was the most loyal man in the world, bade them not trouble themselves. 'It is better,' said he, 'to lose my daughter than to break my word; the one evil afflicts few, the other would injure all: for how would the people keep faith with one another if they could not depend upon the king's truth?' And he commanded his daughter to be brought. When the queen and her ladies heard that, they made the most sorrowful outcry that ever was heard; but the king ordered them to their chambers, and he forbade all his people to lament on pain of losing his favour. 'My daughter,' cried he, 'must fare as God hath appointed, but my word shall never be wilfully broken.'"

Instances of a similar rigid adherence to knightly faith can be produced from real history. The Duke of Gueldres being on a journey through Prussia, was laid in wait for, and made prisoner, by certain banditti, or adventurers, commanded by a squire, named Arnold. When the grand-master of the Teutonic order heard what had happened, he marched against the castle where the duke was confined, with so strong a force, that Arnold durst not abide his coming. Hereupon he said to his prisoner, "Sir duke, ye are my prisoner, and I am your master. Ye are a gentleman and true knight; ye have sworn, and given me your faith. I think not to abide the master of Pruce; he cometh hither with a great force. Tarry here if you list, I will carry with me your faith and promise." To this he added the name of the place to which he retreated, and so left the

duke at liberty. The duke waited the arrival of the grand-master; but was so far from considering it as absolving him from his captivity, that no entreaties nor representations could stay him from acquitting his faith, by again putting himself into the hands of Arnold; with whom he remained a prisoner, till he was ransomed by his friends.

The quarrel betwixt King Lisuarte and Amadis, because he would not bestow upon Galvanes the hand of his captive Madasima, and the dominion of the island which she inherited, and which he had conquered; the manner in which Amadis and his kindred renounce the service of Lisuarte; the mutual defiances which are formally exchanged betwixt them; are all in the high tone of feudal solemnity, and are well worthy the attention of those who investigate the customs of the middle ages. The reader may compare the mode in which these defiances were received, with the deportment of the Black Prince, when he was served with a writ of summons to attend the parliament at Paris:

> "When the prince had read this letter, he had great marvel, and shook his head, and beheld fiercely the Frenchmen; and when he had a little studied he answered in this manner: 'Sirs, we will gladly go to Paris to our uncle sith he hath sent thus for us; but I assure you, that it shall be with bassnet on our head, and sixty thousand men in our company.'"—FROISSART.

We have dwelt the more fully upon the manners of this romance, because they correspond exactly with those of the period in which it was written. In the romances which were composed during the declension of chivalry, the writers no longer painted from the life. The manners which they described were as fictitious as the adventures which they narrated; and the reader may look for such historical resemblances as we have noticed with as little success, as if he were to consult a map for the situation of Taprobana, or the Firm Island.

We have already observed, that the story of Amadis is constructed with singular ingenuity. The unvaried recurrence of the combat with the lance and the sword is indeed apt to try the patience of the modern reader; although the translator's compassion has spared them some details, and "consolidated," as he rather quaintly says, "many of those single blows which have no reference to armorial anatomy." But, in defiance of the similarity of combat and adventure,

the march of the story engages our attention; and the successive events are well managed to support each other, and to bring on the final catastrophe. It is not our intention to give a detailed account of the story, but the following sketch may excite rather than forestall the curiosity of the reader.

Perion, king of Gaul, the guest of Garinter, king of Brittany, becomes enamoured of the fair Elisene, daughter of that monarch, obtains a private interview, and departs to his own kingdom. The princess becomes pregnant, and, to hide her disgrace, the child, afterwards the famous Amadis, is placed in a cradle, and launched into the sea. He is found by a knight of Scotland, and carried to that kingdom, where he is educated as the son of his preserver. Meanwhile, Perion marries Elisene, and they have a second son, called Galaor, who is carried off by a giant, and brought up to feats of arms and chivalry. Amadis, in the interim, is brought by his foster father to the court of Scotland, where he meets Oriana, daughter of Lisuarte, king of Britain. To her he becomes warmly attached, and, when knighted, prevails on her to receive him as her cavalier. Thus animated, he sets forth on his military career, to assist Perion of Gaul, who is only known to him as the ally of the Scottish monarch, against Abyes, king of Ireland, who had besieged Perion in his capital. But no knight-errant ever attains the direct place of his destination, when he happens to have one, without some *by-battles*. Several of these fall to Amadis's lot; and he is involved in many dangers, through which he is protected by the friendship of Urganda the Unknown, a mighty enchantress, the professed patroness of his house. Arriving at length at the capital of Gaul, he terminates the war, by the defeat and death of Abyes, whom he slays in single combat. After this exploit, by means of tokens which had been placed in his cradle, he is recognised and acknowledged as the son of Perion and Elisene. By this time Gandalac, the tutor of Galaor, conceived him to be ready to execute the purpose for which he had carried him off; namely, to maintain a battle on his account, against a brother giant who had injured him. Galaor having previously received the order of knighthood from his brother Amadis, though without knowing him, undertakes the combat, which terminates like all combats between giants and knights. Amadis, meanwhile, repairs to the court of Lisuarte, father of Oriana, and distinguishes himself by feats of chivalry,

subduing all competitors by his courage, and attaching them to his person by his valour and liberality. Galaor runs a similar career, with this advantage over his brother, that he seldom fails to be repaid for his labours, by the distressed damozels whom he fortunes to relieve. At length Amadis, at the instigation of a certain dwarf, enters the castle of Arcalaus, whose captives he releases, and whom he defeats in single combat. Here, nevertheless, he is made prisoner by enchantment, and is in great peril, until released by the counter spells of his friend Urganda. The conjuror was, however, not to be provoked with impunity: he contrives, by a trick already noticed, to get into his possession the lovely Oriana; and, by another device, had well nigh slain her father Lisuarte, who was fortunately relieved by Galaor. An insurrection, fomented by Arcalaus, is also quelled, and Oriana is rescued from the enchanter, by the irresistible arm of Amadis. His faithful services are rewarded by possession of his mistress; and thus closes the first book of Amadis. Among other distressed princesses relieved by Amadis, chanced to be the lovely queen Briolania,* who became desperately enamoured of her deliverer, (being the same, indeed, whose hopeless passion excited the compassion of the Prince of Portugal.) Oriana, from an inaccurate account of this affair, becomes jealous, and despatches a severe and cruel message to Amadis. This reaches him, just as he had accomplished a notable adventure in the Firm Island, by entering an enchanted chamber, which could only be entered by the truest lover who lived upon earth. The message of Oriana drives him to distraction; he forswears arms, and becomes the companion of the hermit on the Poor

* Although Cervantes states the dispute which occurred betwixt Don Quixote and Cardenio, in the Sierra Morena, to have respected the character of Queen Madasima, yet the person meant must have been this Queen Briolania. For Helisabad the surgeon, the person who gave the scandal, was the servant and attendant of Briolania, not of Madasima. Besides, the character of the latter was untainted (the story of her having twins by Amadis being altogether apocryphal;) whereas even the knight of La Mancha could not have vouched for the chastity of Madasima, who was one of the numerous mistresses of Don Galaor, and otherwise a lady of light conditions. Don Galvanes is supposed to have married her only for her fortune, and had the greater right to resent Lisuarte's attempt to deprive him of it. If this be not an accidental mistake of Cervantes, he referred to some history of Amadis, very different from that of Montalvo.

Rock, where he does penance, till he is near death's door. The place of his residence at length comes to Oriana's knowledge, who, sensible of her injustice, recalls him to her presence, and of course to health and happiness. His return to the *island* of Windsor, where Lisuarte kept his court, is of the utmost importance to that prince, who reaps the advantage of his assistance, in a direful contest with Cildadan of Ireland, assisted by certain sons of Anak, whose names it would take us too much time to write, since few of them are under six syllables in length. This giant brood being routed and dispersed, Lisuarte is induced, by certain deceitful, flattering, and envious courtiers, to treat the services of Amadis with slight and neglect. Ere long, this coldness comes to an open breach: Amadis, and his friends and followers, formally renounce the service of Lisuarte; and all retire, with their heroic leader, to the Firm Island, the sovereignty of which he had acquired. Galaor alone, bound by repeated obligations to Lisuarte, continues to adhere to him; and thus the author artfully contrives, that the reader shall retain an interest, even in the party opposed to Amadis. Oriana, during the absence of her lover, is secretly delivered of a son, named Esplandian; but as the heroines of the author are all mothers before they are wives, so they are never trusted with the education of their own children. The little Esplandian is carried off by a lioness, from whom he is rescued by a saint and hermit, called Nasciano. He is educated by this holy man, and in process of time presented to his grandfather Lisuarte, and received into the train of his own mother. During this long space, Amadis wanders about the world, redressing wrongs, slaying monsters, and turning the tide of battle against the oppressors, wherever he comes. He has even the generosity (in disguise) to assist Lisuarte in a very desperate battle with Aravigo, a powerful monarch, whom the inveterate enchanter Arcalaus had stirred up against the king of Britain. But the emperor of Rome, El Patin, as the romance calls him, sends to Lisuarte, to demand the hand of his daughter Oriana; and the king, seduced by ambition, is ill-advised enough to force his daughter to this marriage, in spite of the advice of his best counsellors. Amadis repairs, under a new disguise to Britain; and the knights sent by the emperor to receive his bride, sustain at his hands a thousand disgraces, unpitied by the English, to whom they

were odious for their insolence and presumption. At length the princess is put on board the Roman fleet; but that fleet is intercepted, and after a desperate combat, finally defeated by a squadron fitted out from the Firm Island, to which Oriana is conveyed in triumph. The discretion of Amadis in his love, gave a colour to this exploit, totally foreign from the real cause. Amadis and Oriana, notwithstanding their long separation, meet like a brother and sister; and the knights of the Firm Island send to justify their proceedings to Lisuarte, declaring, that by his forcing her choice, his daughter was placed in the predicament of a distressed damsel, whose wrongs, by their oath of knighthood, they were bound to redress. The apology is ill received by the king of Britain; who, with the emperor of Rome, and all the allies who adhered to him, prepared to invade the Firm Island. Amadis, supported by his father King Perion, and many princes and queens who owed their crowns and honour to his prowess, assembles an army capable of meeting his enemy. Two desperate battles are fought, in which Lisuarte is finally worsted, but without being dishonoured by a total defeat. The brunt of the day falls upon the Romans, whom the author had no motive for sparing, and the emperor is slain on the field. In the meanwhile, the sainted hermit Nasciano, who had educated Esplandian, and to whom Oriana had in confession revealed the history of her love to Amadis, arrives in the camp of Lisuarte, and by his mediation brings about a truce, both parties agreeing to retreat a day's journey from each other. But Lisuarte, whose army was most weakened, was, by this retrograde movement, exposed to much danger. Arcalaus the enchanter had had influence enough with King Aravigo, to prevail upon him to levy a huge army, with which he lurked in the mountains, waiting until Lisuarte and Amadis should have exhausted their strength in mutual conflict. Being in some measure disappointed in his expectations, Aravigo held it far most expedient to fall upon Lisuarte in his retreat, whom, after a valiant resistance, he reduces to the last extremity: this is the moment which the author has chosen to exhibit the magnanimity of Amadis and to bring about a reconciliation. The instant he hears of Lisuarte's danger, our hero flies to his assistance, and the reader will anticipate with what success: Aravigo is slain, and Arcalaus made prisoner, and

cooped up in a cage of iron. The father of Oriana is reconciled to her lover; and the introduction of Esplandian has its effect in hastening so desirable an event. The nuptials of Amadis and Oriana take place; and the other heroines are distributed among the champions of the Firm Island, with great regard to merit. One thing yet remained:—To finish the enchantments of the Firm Island, it was necessary that the fairest dame in the world should enter the enchanted chamber. Need we add, that dame was Oriana? "Then was the feast spread, and the marriage-bed of Amadis and Oriana made in that chamber which they had won."

Through the whole of this long work, the characters assigned to the different personages are admirably sustained. That of Amadis is the true knight-errant. Of him it might be said in the language of Lobeira's time, that he was "true, amorous, sage, secret, bounteous, full of prowess, hardy, adventurous, and chivalrous." Don Galaor, the *Ranger* of knight-errantry, forms a good contrast to his brother. Lisuarte, even where swayed by the most unreasonable prejudices, shows as it were occasionally, his natural goodness, so as always to prevent the total alienation of our good opinion and interest. The advantage given by the author to the vassals and dependents over the *Suzerain*, shows plainly a wish to please the numerous petty princes and barons at the expense of the liege lord. This may be remarked in many romances of chivalry, particularly in those of Charlemagne and his Paladins. Even the inferior characters are well, though slightly sketched. The presumption of the emperor, the open gallantry and dry humour of old Grumedan the king's standard bearer, the fidelity of Gandalin, squire to Amadis, the professional manners of Master Helisabad the physician, with many others, are all in true style and costume.

The machinery introduced in Amadis does not, as Mr. Southey observes, partake much of the marvellous. Arcalaus is more to be redoubted for his courage and cunning, than for his magic. Urganda is a fay similar to those which figure in the lays of Brittany, and, except her character of a prophetess, and some legerdemain tricks of transformation, has not much that is supernatural in her character.

It remains to make some observations on Mr. Southey's

mode of executing his translation, which appears to us marked with the hand of a master. The abridgements are judiciously made; and although some readers may think too much has still been retained, yet the objection will only occur to such as read merely for the story, without any attention to Mr. Southey's more important object of exhibiting a correct example of those romances, by which our forefathers were so much delighted, and from which we may draw such curious inferences respecting their customs, their morals, and their modes of thinking. The popular romance always preserves, to a certain degree, the manners of the age in which it was written. The novels of Fielding and Richardson are even already become valuable, as a record of the English manners of the last generation. How much, then, should we prize the volumes which describe those of the era of the victors of Cressy and Poitiers! The style of Mr. Southey is, in general, what he proposed, rather antique, from the form of expression, than from the introduction of obsolete phrases. It has something of the scriptural turn, and much resembles the admirable translation of Froissart.* Some words have inadvertently been used, which, to us, savour more of vulgarity than beseems the language of chivalry. Such are the phrases, "devilry," "Sir Knave," "Don False One," and some others. But we only mention these, to show that our general praise has not been inconsiderately bestowed.

Mr. Southey has made an apology for not translating the names, which convey some meaning in the original: "I have used Beltenebros, instead of the Beautiful Darkling, or the Fair Forlorn; Florestan, instead of Forester; El Patin, instead of the Emperor Gosling; as we speak of Barbarossa, not Red-Beard; Boccanegra, not Black Muzzle; St. Peter, not Stone the Apostle." We cannot help thinking this apology as unnecessary, as the examples are whimsical. Proper names are never rendered into a familiar dialect, but with a view of making them ridiculous; although they are sometimes translated into a less known language, to give them dignity. Thus, Mr. Wood is said to have been converted into *Dr. Lignum*, and to have gained by the ex-

* He that would acquire an idea of the language of chivalry, cannot too often study the work of Bourchier Lord Berners.

change; while it is well known that the Portuguese ambassador, Don Pedro Francisco Correo de Sylva, was chased from the court of Charles the Second, by the ridicule attached to the nickname of *Pierre du Bois*, into which his sounding title was rendered by the Duke of Buckingham: and, surely, to talk of the Chief Consul *Good-part*, would be as absurd as the epithet would be inapplicable. As for Stone the Apostle, we have only heard of one bearing that name, who had also the fate of a prophet; for his doctrines were no otherwise honoured in his own country, than by the notice of the king's attorney-general.*

So much for the prose edition of *Amadis*, with the perusal of which we have been highly gratified.

We have already given it as our opinion, that the history of *Amadis* was, in its original state, a metrical romance. We remember, also, to have seen an Italian poem in ottava rima, called *Il Amadigi*, chiefly remarkable for the whimsical rule which the poet had imposed upon himself, of opening each canto with a description of the morning, and closing it with a description of the night. Mr. William Stewart Rose has now favoured the public with a poetical version of the First Book of *Amadis*, containing the birth and earlier adventures of the hero, and closing with his gaining possession of Oriana.

In our remarks upon this poem, we are more inclined to blame, in some degree, Mr. Rose's plan, than to find fault with the execution, which appears to us, upon the whole, to be nearly as perfect as the plan admitted. Mr. Rose has indeed stated his pretensions so very modestly, that perhaps we are warranted in thinking, that a culpable degree of diffidence has prevented him from assuming a tone of poetry more decided and animated.

"That the extract I now present to the public," says Mr. Rose, "is closely translated, I cannot venture to affirm. I have, I con-

* [The Rev. Richard Stone, A.M., Rector of Norton, Essex, was, May 1808, on trial in the Consistory Court, convicted of having preached and published doctrines regarding the Messiah, subversive of the authority of certain passages in two of the Evangelists, and which when called upon to revoke he refused. Sir William Scott officially reported the case to an ecclesiastical convocation; in which the Bishop of London forthwith pronounced sentence of degradation, depriving Mr. Stone of his clerical benefice.]

fess, attempted to introduce some of those trifling ornaments, which even the simplest style of poetry imperiously demands, and have, in many instances, altered the arrangement, and very much contracted the narration of the original: I trust, however, that I shall not be convicted of having, in my trifling deviations, introduced anything which is at variance with the spirit or tone of the celebrated romance."

With the alterations and abbreviations of Mr. Rose we have not the most distant intention of quarrelling; on the contrary we think, that his too close adherence to his original is the greatest defect in the book. Mr. Rose was not engaged in translating a poem, but in composing one; the story of which was adopted from a prose work. We therefore do not conceive that he was obliged to limit himself to trifling ornaments, or to the very simplest style of poetry. Even in modernizing ancient poetry, and that, too, the poetry of Chaucer, containing no small portion of fire, Dryden thought himself at liberty to heighten and enlarge the descriptions of his great master. But in his versions from prose pieces,—in the tale of Theodore and Honoria, for ex-example,—he borrowed from Boccacio only the outline of the story; the language, the conduct, and the sentiment, were all his own, and all in the highest strain of poetry. In like manner, we cannot see why Mr. Rose should have thought himself obliged to follow in any respect the prose of Herberay, while he himself was writing poetry. We can easily conceive that a prose romance may be converted into a metrical romance or epic poem; but we cannot allow, that there ought to subsist betwixt two works, the style of which is so very different, the relations of a translation and an original work. In consequence of Mr. Rose's plan, it appears to us that his poem has suffered some injury. The necessity of following out minutely the prose narrative, occasions an occasional languor in the poem, for which simple, and even elegant versification, does not atone. We will, however, frankly own, that the casual circumstance of having perused Mr. Southey's prose work before the poem of Mr. Rose may have had some influence upon our criticism; since our curiosity being completely forestalled, we may have felt a diminished interest in the latter from a cause not imputable to want of merit.

The avowed model upon which Mr. Rose has framed his Amadis is the translation of Le Grand's *Fabliaux* by Mr.

Way; and it is but justice to state that, in our opinion, he has fully attained what he proposed. An easy flow of verse, partaking more of the school of Dryden than of Pope, and checkered, occasionally, with ancient words and terms of chivalry, seems well calculated for the narration of romance and legendary tale. The following passage is a successful imitation of Chaucer:—

> "To tell, as meet, the costly feast's array,
> My tedious tale would hold a summer's day:
> I let to sing who mid the courtly throng
> Did most excel in dance or sprightly song;
> Who first, who last, were seated on the dais;
> Who carped of love and arms in courtliest phrase,
> What many minstrels harp, what bratchets lie
> The feet beneath, what hawks were placed on high."

We do not pretend to say, that Mr. Rose's poetry is altogether free from the common-places of the time. Such lines occur as these:—

> "Nearer and nearer bursts the deafening crash,
> Athwart the lurid clouds red lightnings flash."

But if Mr. Rose's plan prevented him from aspiring to the higher flights of poetry, he never, on the other hand, disgusts the reader by sinking into bathos. We are persuaded that the public would be interested in a modern version of some of our best metrical romances by Mr. Rose. We are the more certain of this, because we have read the notes to *Amadis* with very great satisfaction. We pay them a very great compliment, indeed, when we say, that they resemble in lightness and elegance, though not in extent of information, those of George Ellis to Way's *Fabliaux*.

SOUTHEY'S CHRONICLE OF THE CID.

[Quarterly Review, February, 1809.]

The name of the Cid is best known to us by the celebrated tragedy of Corneille, founded on a circumstance which happened early in the champion's career, and which the Spanish compilers of his story do not dwell upon with any peculiar emphasis. Those who are deep read in Don Quixote may also recollect, that the Campeador and his great exploits against the Moors was one of the subjects that deranged the brain of the worthy knight of La Mancha. Few English or French literati know more of a hero as famous in Spain as Bertrand du Guesclin in France, Glendower in Wales, or Wallace in Scotland; yet have his achievements been recorded in the "letter blake," and harped in many a hall and bower.

> "Desde Sevilla a Marchena,
> Desde Granada hasta Leja."

Mr. Southey, to whom the fabulous heroes of Spain, her Amadis, and her Palmerin, have such obligations, has undertaken the same generous task in favour of the Cid, the real champion of a history scarcely less romantic than theirs. His work is not to be considered as the precise translation of any of the numerous histories of the Cid, but as a compilation of all that relates to him extracted from those several sources. First, a prose chronicle of the life and achievements of the Cid, printed in 1552 and 1593, which there is some reason to ascribe to Gil Diaz, a converted Moor, one of the Cid's most faithful followers. This is corrected and enlarged from a general chronicle of Spanish history. Secondly, a metrical legend, of which the Cid is the hero. This work, which fluctuates between history and romance, has a considerable degree of poetical merit, is the oldest poem in the Spanish language, and, in Mr. Southey's judg-

ment, decidedly and beyond all comparison the finest. Lastly, the translator has laid under contribution the popular ballads or romances which celebrated the feats of this renowned warrior—and were sung by minstrels, jongleurs, and glee-men, at places of festive resort. Mr. Southey is not inclined to rank very highly either the authority or the antiquity of these songs, and has made little use of them in compiling his Chronicle. By these lights, however, he has guided the narrative through the following details.

Rodrigo of Bivar, "a youth strong in arms and of good customs," destined to protect his country from the Moors, was born at Burgos in the reign of King Ferrando of Castile, and in the year 1026. His father Diego Laynez, chief of the noble house, had received a blow from the Count Don Gomez, the Lord of Gormaz. The consequences are described in a picturesque manner, and form a good specimen of this singular narrative.

"Now Diego was a man in years, and his strength had passed from him, so that he could not take vengeance, and he retired to his home, to dwell there in solitude, and lament over his dishonour. And he took no pleasure in his food, neither could he sleep by night, nor would he lift up his eyes from the ground, nor stir out of his house, nor commune with his friends, but turned from them in silence, as if the breath of his shame would taint them. Rodrigo was yet but a youth, and the count was a mighty man in arms, one who gave his voice first in the Cortes, and was held to be the best in the war, and so powerful, that he had a thousand friends among the mountains. Howbeit all these things appeared as nothing to Rodrigo when he thought of the wrong done to his father, the first which had ever been offered to the blood of Layn Calvo. He asked nothing but justice of Heaven, and of man he asked only a fair field; and his father seeing of how good heart he was, gave him his sword and his blessing. The sword had been the sword of Mudarra in former times, and when Rodrigo held its cross in his hand, he thought within himself that his arm was not weaker than Mudarra's. And he went out, and defied the count and slew him, and smote off his head, and carried it home to his father. The old man was sitting at table, the food lying before him untasted, when Rodrigo returned, and pointing to the head which hung from the horse's collar, dropping blood, he bade him look up, for there was the herb which should restore to him his appetite: the tongue, quoth he, which insulted you is no longer a tongue, and the hand which wronged you is no longer a hand. And the old man arose and embraced his son, and placed him above him at the table, saying, that he who had brought home that head should be the head of the house of Layn Calvo."—P. 3.

This prosperous commencement was followed by a victory which Rodrigo obtained over five of the Moorish petty princes, who had allied themselves to spoil the country of Castile. Their defeat was so complete, that they submitted to be in future the vassals of the victor. About the same time Ximena Gomez, daughter of the count (the Chimene of Corneille), came before the King, and having stated that Rodrigo had slain her father, prayed his majesty to command him to make atonement by taking her to wife, "for God's service, and that she might be enabled to grant him her hearty pardon." Neither the king nor Rodrigo felt a desire to resist so singular a request, and the marriage was concluded accordingly. We cannot stop to relate how Rodrigo displayed his charity by plucking a foul leper out of a morass, and placing him at his own table, and how the leper proved to be no less a person than St. Lazarus, who had thus disguised himself to prove the young warrior's love of God and his neighbour; nor can we narrate his single combat with Martin Gonzales, nor those repeated conquests over the Moors, which caused him to be distinguished among the vanquished by the name of *El Cid*, or The Lord, a title which he afterwards made so famous in history. While his fame was rapidly advancing, the kingdom of Castile was convulsed with civil war. The King Don Ferrando had died, leaving three sons and one daughter, among whom, with the usual impolicy of the times, he attempted to divide his dominions. But the kings of Spain were of the blood of Goths, which is emphatically said to be a *fierce blood,* and certainly no history, excepting that of the heaven-abandoned Jews, is stained with more murders, conspiracies, and unnatural civil broils. The Cid was among the subjects of Castile, whose fealty descended to the eldest son, Don Sancho, and he had no small part in the wars which that monarch made upon his brethren, Garcia and Alfonso. When Sancho had dethroned and imprisoned both his younger brothers, he forced Alfonso to become a monk, but he escaped from his convent, and fled to the Moors of Toledo, who received him with great hospitality. Meanwhile, Sancho resolved to deprive his sister Urraca of the city and dependencies of Zamora, which the king, her father, had bequeathed to her. And it was while besieging this city that he was treacherously slain by one of her adherents, who pretended to desert to his party.

This gave occasion to one of those scenes which illustrate the singular manners of the age. It was resolved in the camp of the deceased monarch that the town of Zamora should be impeached for the treason committed, and for having received the traitor within her gates after the perpetration of the murder. The task of denouncing it devolved upon Diego Ordonez, a right good and noble warrior; for the Cid, who might otherwise have been expected to be foremost in the revenge of his master's death, had uniformly refused to bear arms against Donna Urraca, because they had been brought up together, and he remembered "the days that were past." Diego Ordonez came before the walls fully armed, and having summoned to the battlements Arias Gonzalo, who commanded the city for Urraca, he pronounced this celebrated impeachment in the following words:—

"The Castilians have lost their Lord: the traitor Vellido slew him, being his vassal, and ye of Zamora have received Vellido and harboured him within your walls. Now therefore I say that he is a traitor who hath a traitor with him, if he knoweth and consenteth unto the treason. And for this I impeach the people of Zamora, the great as well as the little, the living and the dead, they who now are and they who are yet unborn; and I impeach the waters which they drink and the garments which they put on; their bread and their wine, and the very stones in their walls. If there be any one in Zamora to gainsay what I have said, I will do battle with him, and with God's pleasure conquer him, so that the infamy shall remain upon you."—P. 75.

In answer to this defiance, Gonzalo informed the champion, with great composure, that perhaps he was not aware of the law of arms in the case of impeachment of a council; which provided that the accuser should contend not with one only, but with five champions of the community successively, and his accusation was only held true if he retired victorious from this unequal contest. Ordonez, though somewhat disconcerted at this point of military law, which was confirmed by twelve alcaldes, chosen on each side, was under the necessity of maintaining his impeachment. Gonzalo, on the other hand, having first ascertained that none of the people of Zamora had been privy to the treason, resolved, that he himself and his four sons would fight in their behalf With difficulty he is prevailed upon, by the tears and intreaties of Urraca, to let his sons first try their fortune. One of them enters the lists after his father had armed, instructed, and

blessed him. The youth is slain in the conflict; and the victor calls aloud, "Don Arias, send me another son, for this one will never fulfil your bidding." He then retires from the lists to change his horse and arms, and to refresh himself with three sops of bread and a draught of wine, agreeably to the rules of combat. The second son of Gonzalo enters the lists, and is also slain. Ordonez then lays his hand on the bar, and exclaims, "Send me another son, Don Arias, for I have conquered two, thanks be to God!" Rodrigo Arias, the eldest and strongest of the brethren, then encounters the challenger, and in the exchange of two desperate blows he receives a mortal wound; while at the same time, the horse of Ordonez, also wounded, runs out of the lists with his rider. This was a nice point of the *duelle;* for, on the one hand, the challenger had combated and vanquished his enemy; on the other, he had himself, however involuntarily, been forced out of the lists; which was such a mark of absolute defeat that even death was not held so strong. And there is a Spanish story of a duel, in which the defendant slew the challenged party; but the defunct being very corpulent and heavily armed, the victor was unable to heave him over the palisade, and after labouring the whole day to no purpose, was at sunset very rationally held to be convicted of the treason of which he had been accused; because he could not give the necessary and indispensable proof that he had vanquished the accuser. The judges of the field, in the impeachment of Zamora, did not choose positively to decide so nice a dependence. It would be probably doing those worthy alcaldes injustice to suppose, that they were moved with compassion either for the challenger, who had still such an unequal contest before him, or for Don Arias, who having lost three of his children, was to risk his own life with that of his remaining son. But whether from unwonted feelings of pity, or because the case could not be judged, they held the third combat to be a drawn battle, and would not allow Ordonez to proceed in his accusation. Thus Don Arias, at the expense of the lives of his three gallant sons, delivered from impeachment the people of Zamora, born and unborn, living and dead, past, present, and to come, together with their waters, their food, their garments, and the stones of their battlements. It would have been, no doubt, as easy to have delivered up the

murderer, whose act both parties agreed in condemning; but it is not the least fantastical part of the story, that he was suffered to elude all punishment, excepting that the chronicle assures us he could not escape it in hell, "where he is tormented with Dathan and Abiram, and with Judas the traitor, for ever and ever."

While this scene was passing before Zamora, Alfonso, the remaining brother of the deceased Sancho, received the news of his murder; and resolved immediately to quit Toledo, where he was the guest of the Moorish monarch, Alimaymon, in order to take possession of the kingdom of Castile, to which he was now sole heir. That monarch had already heard a rumour of Sancho's death, and posted guards in the passage to prevent his guest, now become a hostage of importance, from departing without his leave. But when Alfonso boldly and openly requested his license to return to Castile, the generous Moslem answered—

"I thank God, Alfonso, that thou hast told me of thy wish to go into thine own country; for in this thou hast dealt loyally by me, and saved me from that which might else have happened, to which the Moors have always importuned me. And hadst thou departed privily thou couldst not have escaped being slain or taken. Now, then, go and take thy kingdom; and I will give thee whatever thou hast need of to give to thine own people, and win their hearts that they may serve thee."—P. 85.

He then requested him to swear friendship to himself and his sons; but in enumerating them, he "had a grandson whom he dearly loved, who was not named in the oath, *and therefore Don Alfonso was not bound to keep it towards him.*" And the historian records it as a high instance of generosity, that Alfonso was so far from taking advantage of this omission, that, on a future occasion, when Alimaymon was as much in his power as he had been in Alimaymon's, he compelled the Moor to release him from the oath, but only that he might take it again fully, freely, and with all solemnity. When King Alfonzo arrived in his kingdom, he found that many of his nobility, but especially the Cid, nourished a suspicion that he had been in some sort accessory to the murder of his brother Sancho. To purge himself of this guilt, the king and twelve knights as his compurgators, made oath of his innocence, upon the Gospels in the church of St. Gadea, at Burgos. The Cid administered the oath with a rigour which implied the strength of his suspicions; and the

following is the account of the manner in which the king was obliged to exculpate himself in the face of his people.

"And the king came forward upon a high stage, that all the people might see him, and my Cid came to him to receive the oath; and my Cid took the book of the Gospels and opened it, and laid it upon the altar, and the king laid his hands upon it, and the Cid said unto him, 'King Don Alfonso, you come here to swear concerning the death of King Don Sancho, your brother, that you neither slew him nor took counsel for his death; say now you, and these hidalgos, if ye swear this.' And the king and the hidalgos answered and said, 'Yea, we swear it.' And the Cid said, 'If ye knew of this thing, or gave command that it should be done, may you die even such a death as your brother the King Don Sancho, by the hand of a villain whom you trust; one who is not a hidalgo, from another land, not a Castilian;' and the king and the knights who were with him said Amen. And the king's colour changed; and the Cid repeated the oath unto him a second time, and the king and the twelve knights said Amen to it in like manner, and in like manner the countenance of the king was changed again. And my Cid repeated the oath unto him a third time, and the king and the knights said Amen; but the wrath of the king was exceeding great, and he said to the Cid, 'Ruydiez, why dost thou thus press me, man? To-day thou swearest me, and to-morrow thou wilt kiss my hand.' And from that day forward there was no love towards my Cid in the heart of the king."—P. 88.

The Castilian monarch having this offence deeply engraved in his remembrance, took the first occasion which offered, to banish the Cid from his dominions, on pretence of some incursions which he had made on the friendly Moors of Toledo. The Cid then assembled the relations, vassals, and retainers, whom his influence or high military reputation had attached to his person, and resolved at their head to leave Castile, and subsist by a predatory war upon the Moors.

"And as he was about to depart, he looked back upon his own home, and when he saw his hall deserted, the household chests unfastened, the doors open, no cloaks hanging up, no seats in the porch, no hawks upon the perches, the tears came into his eyes, and he said, 'My enemies have done this. God be praised for all things.' And he turned toward the East, and knelt and said, 'Holy Mary Mother, and all Saints, pray to God for me, that he may give me strength to destroy all the Pagans, and to win enough from them to requite my friends therewith, and all those who follow and help me.'"—P. 97.

In passing through Burgos, no one dared to receive him into his house, the king having given strict command to the contrary; and such sorrow had the Christian people at

obeying these severe injunctions, that they durst not look upon the champion as he rode through the solitary streets of their city. When he came to his *posada*, or hotel, and struck against the door with his foot, none made answer but a little girl of nine years old, who informed him of the king's command. He turned in silence from the door of the inn, rode to the church of St. Mary, where "he kneeled down, and prayed with all his heart," and then encamped with his retinue on the sands near the city. There is something very striking in this picture—the silence with which the Cid receives his unjust sentence—the dignity with which he contemns the mean effort of the king to increase his distress and embarrassment;—the desolate state to which the city is reduced by the fear and pity of the inhabitants at his approach—the military train slowly parading its streets, and seeking in vain for hospitality or repose;—the swelling heart of the leader venting itself in devotion, when he saw every house, but that of God, shut against him, are all beautiful and affecting circumstances. The next scene is of a very different nature, yet equally curious.

The Cid, like other great persons, setting out upon travel, was in great want of money to maintain his followers. And now we venture to supply an incident from the romances, which, though characteristic, Mr. Southey has omitted. We copy it from a slip-shod translation, which we happen to possess, and which may serve for a sample of these ballads.

"When the Cid, the Campeador
(Of his life may God take care),
With three hundred pennon'd warriors
Forth of good Castile would fare;
Nor the champion, nor his lady,
Had of treasure, coin, or rent,
Even a single maravedi;
All in war and wassaill spent.

Then Ximene took off her garland,
Glittering like the stars of heaven,
Deck'd with gems from Eastern far land,
Which the Moorish Kings had given;
'Take then this, my Roderigo;
Pledged in wealthy merchant's hand,
'Twill supply thee gold, while we go
Wanderers far in foreign land.'

Sola and her little sister,
Daughters of the noble Cid,

When they saw the chaplet's glister
Taken from their mother's head,
Wept to part with such gay jewel,
Clamour'd loud around Ximene;
'Must such garland, O, how cruel,
From our mother dear be ta'en?'

Mark'd the Cid their childish sorrow,
Heard them murmur in dismay:
'Grief enough may come to-morrow,
Give our babes their boon to-day.
Children weep for toys that glitter,
Kings and kaisars do the same:
Why their blithest days embitter?
Keep thy garland, gentle dame.'

Loud their hands the children clapping,
As their father's doom they heard,
And their arms around him wrapping,
Kist his cheeks, and strok'd his beard."

Mr. Southey omits this curious trait of parental tenderness, which we think peculiarly characteristic of the hero, as those who are bravest and even fiercest in war are often distinguished by unlimited indulgence to the objects of their domestic attachments.

The resource from which the Cid drew his supplies was of a questionable description, and not very dissimilar from the devices of our modern knights of industry. He sent one of his adherents, Martin Antolinez, to two wealthy Jews, named Rachael and Vidas, to demand the loan of six hundred merks, upon two chests of treasure, which the Cid meant to deposit in their hands. The sons of Israel lent a willing ear to such a proposal, but when the merks were demanded, they sagaciously observed, that "their way of business was first to take and then to give." Antolinez conducted them to the tent of the Campeador, who dazzled their optics with the exhibition of two huge and heavy chests, covered with leather of red and gold, and secured with ribs of iron, but filled in truth with stones and sand. The Jews, forgetting the caution of their tribe, willingly agreed to advance the sum demanded on a deposit of such a promising aspect; and swore at the same time to keep the chests a full year without opening. So highly delighted were the Israelites with the bargain, that Antolinez contrived to hook out of them thirty merks for agency, to buy himself a pair of hose, a doublet, and a rich cloak. It is not the least curious

part of this story, that when the Cid acquired wealth in the Moorish wars, and sent to redeem the chests with a Spanish hyperbole that they contained his honour, which was the richest treasure in the world, " the people held it for a great wonder; and there was not a place in all Burgos where they did not talk of the gentleness and loyalty of the Cid." The Jews themselves also expressed such grateful surprise as makes it plain that in the ordinary course of things, they would have been left by way of punishment for looking so indifferently after their own interest in the outset of the bargain, to indemnify themselves by the deposit. Nay, we grieve to say, that some contradictory authorities make it not improbable that the Cid consigned them to the doleful predicament of their kinsman, Shylock, to console themselves with the penalty of the bond.

The Cid, thus furnished with munition and money, sets forth against the Moors, leaving his wife and children in the charge of the Abbot of St. Pedro de Cardena. It is not our intention to trace his military exploits, in which there is frequently vivid description, but which nevertheless, from the similarity of incident, are the dullest part of this volume. The following most excellent and spirited, as well as literal translation from the poem of the Cid, is given in the notes. It is not from the pen of Mr. Southey, but from that of a literary friend, who has caught the true tone of the Spanish Homer. The Cid, with his followers, sallies from the Castle of Alcocer, where they were besieged by the Moors.

"The gates were then thrown open, and forth at once they rush'd,
The outposts of the Moorish host back to the camp were push'd;
The camp was all in tumult, and there was such a thunder
Of cymbals and of drums, as if earth would cleave in sunder.
There you might see the Moors arming themselves in haste,
And the two main battles how they were forming fast;
Horsemen and footmen mixt, a countless troop and vast.
The moors are moving forward, the battle soon must join,
'My men, stand here in order, rang'd upon a line!
Let not not a man move from his rank before I give the sign.'
Pero Bermuez heard the word, but he could not refrain.
He held the banner in his hand, he gave his horse the rein;
'You see yon foremost squadron there, the thickest of the foes,
Noble Cid, God be your aid, for there your banner goes!
Let him that serves and honours it show the duty that he owes.'
Earnestly the Cid call'd out, 'For heaven's sake be still!'
Bermuez cried, 'I cannot hold,' so eager was his will.

He spurr'd his horse, and drove him on amid the Moorish rout;
They strove to win the banner, and compast him about.
Had not his armour been so true he had lost either life or limb;
The Cid called out again, 'For heaven's sake succour him!'
Their shields before their breasts, forth at once they go,
Their lances in the rest levell'd fair and low;
Their banners and their crests waving in a row,
Their heads all stooping down toward the saddle-bow.
The Cid was in the midst, his shout was heard afar,
'I am Rui Diaz, the Champion of Bivar;
Strike amongst them, gentlemen, for sweet mercies sake!'
There where Bermuez fought amidst the foe they brake,
Three hundred banner'd knights, it was a gallant show:
Three hundred Moors they kill'd, a man with every blow;
When they wheel'd and turn'd, as many more lay slain,
You might see them raise their lances, and level them again.
There you might see the breast-plates, how they were cleft in twain,
And many a Moorish shield lie scattered on the plain.
The pennons that were white mark'd with a crimson stain,
The horses running wild, whose riders had been slain."—P. 439.

There are many similar exploits described in the same animated tone; and the successes of the Cid soon led him to form plans of more permanent conquest. The dissensions of the Moors aided his views, and at length, after a tedious siege, in which the city suffered the last degree of distress, and after playing off against each other almost all the factions within its walls, the fair city of Valencia became the property of the Cid, and the seat of his power. His fame and his untarnished loyalty had by this time reconciled the Campeador to King Alfonso; so the embassy which the Cid sent to him to announce his new conquest, and to demand his wife and daughters, was most favourably received. When the ladies arrived at Valencia, they had a specimen of the manner in which the Cid had acquired, and was forced to defend his possessions. The city was beleaguered by an immense army of Moors. The Cid conducted his wife and daughters to the highest turret, from which they might see his exploits against the enemy, cheered their sinking spirits with an exclamation, "the more Moors the more gain!" sallied out and utterly discomfited the enemy, making such mortality with his own hand, that the blood ran from the wrist to the elbow. He re-entered the town at the head of his knights.

"His wrinkled brow was seen, for he had taken off his helmet, and in this manner he entered, upon Bavieca, sword in hand.

Great joy had Donna Ximena and her daughters who were awaiting him, when they saw him come riding in; and he stopt when he came to them, and said, 'Great honour have I won for you, while you kept Valencia this day! God and the Saints have sent us goodly gain, upon your coming. Look, with a bloody sword, and a horse all sweat, this is the way that we conquer the Moors! Pray God that I may live yet awhile for your sakes, and you shall enter into great honour, and they shall kiss your hands.' Then my Cid alighted when he had said this, and the ladies knelt down before him, and kissed his hand, and wished him long life."—P. 233.

The fame of the Cid's wealth led Diego and Fernando Gonzales, the Infantes of Carrion, brethren of great rank and high ancestry, to solicit the hands of his two daughters; and the Cid, at the request of King Alfonso, consented to their union. But these noblemen had ill considered their own dispositions in desiring such an union. The Cid, indeed, received them with all honour in Valencia, and bestowed on them many rich gifts, and especially his two choice swords, Colada and Tizona. But the Infantes had no taste for killing Moors, which was the principal amusement at the court of the Campeador; and although the Cid prudently disguised his knowledge of their cowardice, he could not save them from the derision of his military retainers. An unfortunate accident brought matters to a crisis. The Cid, it seems, kept a tame lion, which, one day, finding its den unbarred, walked into the hall of the palace, where the banquet was just ended. The lion had happily dined likewise, so he paced coolly towards the head of the table, where the Cid was asleep in his chair. His captains and knights crowded around him for his defence; but his sons-in-law holding, with Bottom, that there is not a more fearful wild fowl than your lion living, threw themselves, the one behind the Campeador's chair, the other into a wine-press, where he fell into the lees and defiled himself. The Cid awaking as the lion was close upon him, held up his hand, and said, "How's this?" and the lion standing still at his voice, he arose, and taking him by the mane, led him back to his den like a tame mastiff. But the Infantes of Carrion, reading their disgrace in the ill-suppressed laughter of the attendants, adopted a suspicion that this strange scene had been contrived on purpose to put them to shame, and formed a cowardly scheme of revenge.

For this purpose, they craved the Cid's permission to re-

turn to their own country of Carrion, which he readily granted. On the road they led their wives into a forest, where they stripped them, beat them with the girths of their horses, mangled them with their spurs, and left them for dead upon the spot. Here they were found, and brought back to Valencia; and the Cid, incensed at this deadly affront, demanded justice before the king and the cortes of Castile. The investigation was conducted with great form and solemnity. The Cid sent to the place of meeting an ivory throne which he had won at Valencia, "a right noble seat, and of subtle work," which gave rise to much invidious discussion among the Castilian nobles, until Alfonso decided that the Cid should occupy the ivory seat which he had won like a good knight. He then shaped his demand of satisfaction from the Infantes of Carrion into three counts. In the first place, he demanded restitution of the two good swords Colada and Tizona, which being implements they had no great occasion for, were readily resigned. His second demand was for the treasures he had bestowed on them with his daughters. The Infantes, who had quarrelled with their wives but not with their portions, resisted this strenuously, but were obliged to comply by the sentence of the cortes. This account being cleared with no small difficulty, the Cid a third time demanded justice; and stating the injuries done to his daughters, insisted on personal satisfaction from the Infantes. This was the hardest chapter of all; the Infantes could only allege that they had unwarily married beneath their rank.

"Then Count Don Garcia rose and said, 'Come away, Infantes, and let us leave the Cid sitting like a bridegroom in his ivory chair: he lets his beard grow and thinks to frighten us with it!' The Campeador put up his hand to his beard, and said, 'What hast thou to do with my beard, count? Thanks be to God, it is long because it hath been kept for my pleasure;* never son of woman hath taken me by it; never son of Moor or of Christian hath plucked it, as I did yours in your castle of Cabra, count, when I took your castle of Cabra, and took you by the beard; there was not a boy of the host but had his pull at it. What I plucked then is not yet methinks grown even!'"—P. 296.

After a very stormy altercation it is at last settled, that the Infantes of Carrion, together with their uncle and abet-

* *Per esa es luenga que adelicio fue creada.*
Poema del Cid. 3294.

tor, should "do battle" against three of the Cid's knights. The Infantes are defeated, and declared guilty of treason. This singular story is given at length, and with all those minute details which place the very circumstance before our eyes. There is also a literal poetical translation from that part of the poem which represents the scene in the cortes and in the lists. It is by the same hand, and in the same spirited style, as the account of the sally which we have already quoted.

The Cid takes leave of the king, and returns to Valencia, where he bestows his daughters on the Infantes of Arragon and Navarre, two princes of higher rank and more estimable qualities than those whom he had punished. At length, when far advanced in years, he is once more besieged in his city of Valencia, by an immense army of Moors, and is warned by a vision that his end approaches, but that God had granted him grace to defeat the Moors even after his decease. Upon this intimation, the Cid prepares for death, and calling for a precious balsam with which the Soldan of Persia had presented him, he mingled it with rose-water, and tasted nothing else for seven days, during which, though he grew weaker and weaker, yet his countenance appeared even fairer and fresher than before. He then directed that his family and retainers should leave the city after his death, taking with them his dead body, and return to Castile. Having settled his worldly affairs, and ghostly concerns, "this noble baron yielded up his soul, which was pure and without spot, to God," in the year 1099, and the 73d of his life. The body having been washed and embalmed, appeared, by virtue of the balsam on which he had lived, as fresh and fair as if alive. It was supported in an upright state by a thin frame of wood, and the whole being made fast to a right noble saddle, this retinue prepared to leave Valencia.

"When it was midnight, they took the body of the Cid, fastened to the saddle as it was, and placed it upon his horse Bavieca, and fastened the saddle well: and the body sate so upright and well, that it seemed as if he was alive. And it had on painted hose of black and white, so cunningly painted, that no man who saw them would have thought but that they were grieves and cuishes, unless he had laid his hand upon them; and they put on it a surcoat of green sendal, having his arms blazoned thereon, and a helmet of parchment, which was cunningly painted, that every one might have believed it to be iron; and his shield was hung round his neck, and they placed the sword Tizona in his hand, and they

raised his arm, and fastened it up so subtilly, that it was a marve to see how upright he held the sword. And the bishop Don Hieronymo went on one side of him, and the trusty Gil Diaz on the other, and he led the horse Bavieca, as the Cid had commanded him. And when all this had been made ready, they went out from Valencia at midnight, through the gate of Roseros, which is towards Castile. Pero Bermudez went first with the banner of the Cid, and with him five hundred knights who guarded it, all well appointed. And after these came all the baggage. Then came the body of the Cid, with an hundred knights, all chosen men, and behind them Donna Ximena with all her company, and six hundred knights in the rear. All these went out so silently, and with such a measured pace, that it seemed as if there were only a score. And by the time that they had all gone out it was broad day."—P. 336.

Betwixt surprise and miracle, the Moors were completely routed; and the Christians, having spoiled their camp, retired to Castile. But when they proposed to put the body in a coffin, Ximene refused to consent, saying, that while his countenance remained so comely, her children and grandchildren should behold the face of their father. At length it was resolved to set him in his ivory chair, on the right hand of the high altar in the cathedral of Toledo, dressed in noble robes, which were regularly changed, and placing in his left hand his sword Tizona in its scabbard, and in the right the strings of his mantle. Ximena retired into the neighbouring monastery, and Gil Diaz, the Cid's secretary, devoted his life to attend upon her, and upon the good steed Bavieca. Meanwhile the Cid continued for seven years to sit beside the altar. At the expiration of this period, a false Jew, who had hid himself in the church to have the pleasure of plucking that beard which was never plucked when its owner was living, occasioned the body to change its posture. For the "circumcised dog" had no sooner advanced his unhallowed fingers to that noble beard, than the Cid, letting go the strings of his mantle, drew his sword a palm's breadth out of the sheath. The natural consequence of this was the conversion of the Jew. After this miracle, no one ventured to change his dress, or to attempt to sheathe the sword. At length, after sitting ten years in state without alteration, the *nose* of the champion began to change colour. Whether the noses of the attendants felt any sympathetic affection is not said, but the Cid was removed to a vault before the altar, seated, as before, in his ivory chair, with his sword in his hand, and his shield and banner hung upon the walls.

Whether the ivory chair decayed faster than the Cid we know not; but the body was taken from it, placed in a stone coffin, and, after some intermediate translations, finally interred in the chapel of the monastery of Cardena, where "it remains to the present day."

We have not room to tell of the godly end of his wife Ximena, or the attention bestowed on his horse Bavieca, who, having comported himself with laudable spirit and fidelity through the whole of this history, of which he forms no very inconsiderable part, was never mounted by any one after his master's decease, and was buried before the gate of the monastery with the trusty Gil Diaz, his guardian. But we cannot help observing a curious coincidence between an ancient Irish romance, called the death of Cucholinn, and the remarkable circumstances said to have attended the funeral rites of the Cid. Cucholinn (the Cuthullin of the pseudo Ossian) was chief of the warriors of the Red Branch, as they were called, and champion of Ulster. He was mortally wounded in a battle, through the wiles of an enchantress called Meive. Feeling death approach, he thus addresses his foster-brother:—

"'But accompany me, Laogh, to yonder rock, that I may there die, and make my final departure. Let me be supported by resting my breast against that portion of it which advances from the rest; put this sword into my hand, and tie it fast to my wrist, and place my spear and shield as they ought to be; and when my enemies shall see me in that manner, their fear and dread will be still so great, that they will not venture to come and cut off my head, and Connel Cearnach will arrive in time to prevent that body which I quit from being treated with indignity.' Cucholinn walked afterwards towards the rock, and Laogh durst not offer to support him, or draw nigh him, till he had arrived at the place he had chosen, and rested his breast against that part of the rock which projected as he had remarked; and as he leaned against the rock, he put his hand upon his heart, and uttered a moan, saying, 'Till this day I vow and swear, by the gods of the elements, that I knew not but that this heart was of iron or stone; and had I thought it to have been of flesh and blood, perhaps half of the feats of chivalry, and of the noble deeds that I have done, would not have been performed by me! And now, Laogh, when thou seest Eirir, tell her that my affection never hath strayed from her, that through my whole life I have loved her alone, nor ever saw that woman I would have exchanged for her. Relate to her, to Conner, to Connel, and to the men of Ulster, my late actions and my past battles; enumerate to them the numbers I have slain, and the days whereon my enemies have fallen, either by my sword or the

arrows from my quiver, from the rising up until the setting of the sun.'

"Laogh obeyed the orders of Cucholinn, and settled him with his face towards the enemy's camp, and placed his spear and shield by his shoulder, and put his sword into his hand as if ready for combat, and as he grasped it, he expired.

"When Meive and her confederates beheld him placed in that manner, they imagined it was some scheme concerted by Cucholinn to draw them into an ambuscade, and they durst not draw nigh unto him. 'Where is Babh' (or Bava), cried Meive. The sorceress replied, that she was there to fulfil her commands. She sent her therefore to discover if Cucholinn was alive or dead. Bava took the shape of a crow and flew around him; when, having discovered that his spirit was fled, she perched upon his shield; and when the enemy saw this, they came forward; and when they came up to him and found that it was impossible to force his sword out of his hand, 'Cut the sinews of his wrist,' said Lughy, son of Conrec, 'and the sword will fall.' It was done; but as it fell down, it cut off the hands of thirty of the sons of their chieftains, who were looking up to behold that deed done, and this was the last exploit that the arms of that hero performed."

Leaving it to the antiquaries of Ierne to consider whether there is any connection between these stories, we hasten to conclude the article with a few short observations on the information which we may derive from this curious work.

The character of the Cid, who is held up as a model of perfection, contains many points which seem inconsistent with the more refined notions of chivalry. We say nothing of the cruelty which the "Perfect One," as the author frequently calls him, practised without compunction, especially towards his prisoners, whom he usually tortured, to force a discovery of their treasures. And perhaps as the following abominable cruelty was perpetrated on circumcised infidels, it might not be a great blot in his escutcheon. It occurred during the siege of Valencia.

"So he ordered proclamation to be made so loud that all the Moors upon the walls could hear, bidding all who had come out from the town to return into it, or he would burn as many as he should find; and saying also that he would slay all who came out from that time forth. Nevertheless they continued to let themselves down from the walls; and the Christians took them without his knowledge. But as many as he found he burnt alive before the walls, so that the Moors could see them; in one day he burnt eighteen, and cast others alive to the dogs, who tore them in pieces."—P. 194.

This might be all *selon les regles;* but we allude to the whole tenor of his policy with the Moorish chiefs of Va-

lencia, which was of a very indirect and crooked kind, in which his promise was forfeited more than once, and to more than one person. This was a breach of honour on the part of the "Happy One, whom God created in a lucky hour," which seems to derogate from his knightly character. His mode of conducting the charge against the Infantes of Carrion, by which he secured restitution before he demanded revenge for his injured honour, argues a cool and interested mode of reason better becoming an attorney than a warrior. All these are, no doubt, qualified by his extreme and punctilious loyalty towards the king who had exiled him; his warm affection for his family; and his generosity to his vassals, and sometimes to his enemies. Yet, upon the whole, the Cid Ruy Diaz forms no exception to Froissart's general rule, that the knights of Spain had not attained the highest and most refined chivalry practised in France and England. And his story leaves us at a loss whether he had most of the fox, the tiger, or the lion in his disposition; for he seems to have been at least as crafty and cruel as he was brave. It is also worthy of remarking, that the supreme respect, enjoined by the laws of knighthood, to the fair sex, does not appear in this romance. The females all act a subordinate part, and that irreconcilable with their being persons of any influence. It may be hardly fair to quote the beating which the sons-in-law of the Cid bestow upon their wives, as proof of general manners. Yet this castigation, though utterly *extra modum*, was not much wondered at, except in relation to the power and generosity of the Cid, father of the patients. The counts appeal to the whole cortes, whether they had not a title to beat maids of low degree with their girths, and tear them with their long-rowelled spurs; and issue was joined upon an allegation, that the daughters of the Cid were of too high a rank to be subjected to such discipline. Ximena, also, makes a sorry figure in the tale; she comes before the king to ask the hand of the man who had killed her father—a step which surely argued a degraded state in society, and a want of free will. The daughters of the Cid are, with very little ceremony, and without at all consulting their own choice, bestowed on one set of husbands and transferred to another: and, lastly, the passion, or even the word love, does not occur in the whole volume. It is highly probable, that, in this respect, the manners of the

Spaniards were tinged by those of their Mahommedan conquerors, from whom they had caught the Oriental contempt of the female sex.

Many other marks of resemblance between those nations might be pointed out; nor indeed, upon the whole, do the Moors appear to have been a more unamiable race than the Castilian Christians. The volume contains many splendid instances of their generosity and good faith, which are sometimes but indifferently requited by the Christians. It is true, the situation of the Spanish Moors was already become degraded. They were a luxurious people, broken with domestic factions; split into petty principalities; superior to their Christian foes in the arts of peace, therefore affording a tempting prospect of plunder; inferior to them in the art of war, therefore an easy prey. Accordingly, they were considered as the common enemy; the *feræ naturæ*, whom every iron-clad champion had a natural right to hunt down and plunder; while, in obeying so tempting an impulse, he believed himself also to be doing God service.

Yet the constant wars between the Spaniards and the Moors were, from their very continuance, subjected to some degree of rule and moderation. The war was not directed, as in the crusades, to mutual extermination. The Spanish Christians hated the Moors and spoiled them, but their aspect and dress had not for them that novelty which, in the eyes of other nations, removed the infidels almost out of the class of human beings, and added peculiar zest to the pleasure of killing them. The Cid, when he had fairly got possession of Valencia, administered justice indifferently to Moor and Christian; and leaving his "paynim" subjects in possession of their property, contented himself with levying a tythe as an acknowledgement of sovereignty. Of the Moorish manners we do not learn much from this curious volume; but the lamentation over the ruin of Valencia (p. 179) is an interesting specimen of Arabian poetry.

It is sufficiently obvious, that whether the history of the Cid be real or fictitious, it is exceedingly valuable as a singular picture of manners of which we know little or nothing. The history, however, of the chief of a band of adventurers, making war on his own account, and becoming the prince of a conquered territory, with all his intermediate acts, is not so interesting as to lead us to investigate its authenticity.

That the Cid was a real existing personage, distinguished by his exploits against the Moors, cannot be doubted. But although his history does not present a more romantic air than the real chronicles of the age, and has not above a very conscionable proportion of miracles and prodigies, there is reason to believe that it is in many particulars fictitious. The conquest of Valencia seems particularly suspicious. In short, the whole may be dismissed with the account given of the adventures in Montesino's cave, by the ape of Ginez de Passamente, *que parte de las cosas son falsas y parte verisimiles.*

The faults which we have to notice belong to the style. This is an imitation of that of scripture; it is, we think, sometimes too periphrastical, and sometimes it abounds in unnecessary repetitions. It retains also marks of its derivation from metrical romance in the detail and accumulation of particulars, which though sometimes striking, at other times degenerate into mere expletives. Thus we have a march described with, "Who ever saw in Castile so many a precious mule and so many a good going palfrey, and so many great horses, and so many goodly streamers set up, goodly spears and shields adorned with gold and with silver, and mantles and skins, and such sandals of Adria." This is all very well and very animated; but why should we again, only six lines below, have a repetition of "many a great mule, and many a palfrey, and many a good horse," &c. &c. &c. As Mr. Southey was compiling a history, and not making a literal translation of a single work, he would, we think, have been justifiable in compressing one of these descriptions. There are, besides, sundry odd phrases which we could have wished amended. Thus the pursuers making havoc among a flying army, are said to "punish them badly;" we have elsewhere "happy man was his dole," and other expressions more venerable from simplicity than elegance. We dare not proceed too far in these censures, because Mr. Southey has informed us, that reviewers, in censuring his introduction of new words, have only shown their own ignorance of the English language. Despite of this "retort churlish," however, we must say, that if a word be so old that it has become new again, it is unfit, at least generally speaking, for modern use. We have a title to expect payment in the current coin of the day, and may except against

that which bears the effigies of King Cnut, as justly as if it had been struck by Mr. Southey himself. It also seems to us that the story would have been improved by abridging some of the Cid's campaigns, if the conscience of the editor had permitted him.

While we are on the subject of faults, we may just remark that Mr. Southey appears to have mistaken the sense of two or three Spanish terms; but his knowledge of the language is so deep and extensive, that we must, in justice to him, attribute the oversight to a momentary lapse of attention.

But in noticing these defects, we offer our sincere gratitude to Mr. Southey for a most entertaining volume, edited with a degree of taste and learning, which few men in England could have displayed. The introduction and notes are full of the most ample and extraordinary details concerning the state of Spain in the middle ages, from works of equal curiosity and scarcity.

SOUTHEY'S LIFE OF JOHN BUNYAN.*

[Quarterly Review, 1830.]

It has been the boast of our ancestors to improve the constitution of their country by the address with which they have infused a new spirit into old institutions, like the skilful architect who contrives to make the turrets of a feudal castle subservient to the accommodations of modern hospitality. Thus it is, that although Gibbon had, with good reason, stigmatized the nature of the task imposed on the poets laureate during the reign of George III and his predecessors, as the establishment of a stipendiary bard, who every year, and under all circumstances, was bound to furnish a certain measure of praise and verse such as might be sung in presence of the monarch, the taste of our late amiable sovereign preferred, to the total abolition of the office, substituting for its old routine of drudgery the occasional exercise of varied talent and unequalled erudition in illustrating the antiquities and peculiarities of our national literature. Nor could Mr. Southey have chosen a more interesting point for illustration, than the circumstances under which John Bunyan, in spite of a clownish and vulgar education, rose into a degree of popularity scarce equalled by any English writer.

This "Spenser of the people," as Mr. D'Israeli happily calls him, was born at Elstow, near Bedford, in the year 1628. His parents were the meanest, according to his own expression, of all families in the land. They were workers in brass, or, in common parlance, *tinkers*, whose profession bore to that of a brazier the same relation which the cobbler's does to the shoemaker's. It was not followed, however, by Bunyan's father as an itinerant calling, which leads

* *The Pilgrim's Progress, with a Life of* John Bunyan. By Robert Southey, Esq. L. L. D.

Mr. Southey to wonder why it should have come to be esteemed so mean. We believe the reason to be that the tinkers' craft is, in Great Britain, commonly practised by gipsies; and we surmise the probability that Bunyan's own family, though reclaimed and settled, might have sprung from this caste of vagabonds; that they were not, at all events, originally English, would seem the most natural explanation of young John's asking his father, whether he was not of Jewish extraction? (expecting thereby to found on the promises made in the Old Testament to the seed of Abraham).

Of gipsy descent or otherwise, Bunyan was bred up with, and speedily forgot, the slender proportion of schooling then accessible to the children of the poor in England. He was by nature of enthusiastic feelings, and so soon as the subject of religion began to fix his attention, his mind appears to have been agonized with the retrospect of a misspent youth. A quick and powerful imagination was at work on a tender conscience; for it would appear that his worst excesses fell far short of that utter reprobation to which he conceived them entitled. The young tinker, in the wildest period of his life, had never been addicted to intemperance, or to unlawful intercourse with women. He seems to have wrought for his family as an honest and industrious man, and early became the affectionate husband of a deserving wife. His looser habits, in short, seem only to have been those which every ignorant and careless young fellow, of the lowest ranks, falls into; and, probably, profane swearing, sabbath-breaking, and a mind addicted to the games and idle sports of Vanity Fair, were the most important stains upon the character of his youth:—as Mr. Southey sums it up, John Bunyan had been *a blackguard*. Repentance, however, in proportion to the imaginative power of the mind which it agitates, regards past offences with a microscopic eye; nor can we wonder that such an ardent spirit, speaking, in his own energetic language, of his youthful faults, should paint them in blacker colours than the truth authorized. Bunyan had practised none of those debaucheries by which the heart of the epicurean is hardened against all feelings save those which can tend to his own gratification; and if he had lost the valuable time for instruction afforded by the Christian Sabbath, the hours had been given to folly

rather than to vice. We are far, indeed, from desiring to treat these errors with indifference,—they are those with which crime almost always begins its career. But it is interesting to discover the exact amount of transgression for which this strong mind was afflicted with the deepest agonies of remorse.

When it pleased Heaven to awaken this remarkable man to a sense of his own iniquities, the great Civil War was fast approaching; "the land was burning." The nation was divided at once respecting the best form of government for their protection on this side time, and the surest means by which they might obtain felicity hereafter. Of John Bunyan's politics we know nothing, except that he was enrolled for a short time in the Parliamentary army—of his spiritual experience he has left an ample record. A few pious persons, with whom he became acquainted, were of the sect called Baptists, and were esteemed by the new convert, who heard them talk of the mysteries of our religion with joy, hope, and comfort, as a species of saints whose confidence and serenity argued the security of their calling and election; while, on his own condition and prospects, he could look only with a sensation resembling despair.

Such views, natural to an ardent and enthusiastic mind, upon the first awakening of the feelings of conscience, were encouraged by the strict ideas of Calvinistic predestination, which formed the foundation of the creed of Bunyan's sectarian friends. He has described at length the wild tumult of his thoughts, when endeavouring to determine a point which all the schoolmen on earth must be inadequate to solve, and in the course of this fearful state of mind Mr. Southey traces the germ of the Pilgrim's Progress. In a species of vision or waking reverie, he compared his own anxious condition with the sanctified repose of the members of the little Baptist congregation which he had joined.

"'I saw,' he says, 'as if they were on the sunny side of some high mountain, there refreshing themselves with the pleasant beams of the sun, while I was shivering and shrinking in the cold, afflicted with frost, snow, and dark clouds. Methought also betwixt me and them, I saw a wall that did compass about this mountain; now, through this wall my soul did greatly desire to pass; concluding that if I could, I would even go into the very midst of them, and there also comfort myself with the heat of their sun. About this wall I thought myself to go again and again, still pry-

ing as I went, to see if I could find some way or passage, by which I might enter therein; but none could I find for some time. At the last I saw, as it were, a narrow gap, like a little doorway in the wall, through which I attempted to pass. Now the passage being very straight and narrow, I made many offers to get in, but all in vain, even until I was wellnigh quite beat out by striving to get in. At last with great striving, methought I at first did get in my head; and after that, by a sideling striving, my shoulders, and my whole body: then was I exceeding glad, went and sat down in the midst of them, and so was comforted with the light and heat of their sun. Now the mountain and wall, &c., were thus made out to me. The mountain signified the Church of the living God; the sun that shone thereon, the comfortable shining of his merciful face on them that were within; the wall, I thought, was the word, that did make separation between the Christians and the world; and the gap which was in the wall, I thought, was Jesus Christ, who is in the way to God the Father. But forasmuch as the passage was wonderful narrow, even so narrow, that I could not but with great difficulty enter in thereat, it showed me that none could enter into life but those that were in downright earnest; and unless also they left that wicked world behind them; for here was only room for body and soul, but not for body and soul and sin.'"—P. xix.

Doubts, qualms, fears, returned upon him, notwithstanding the metaphorical assurance which this vision had conveyed to his mind. Whatever wild and wayward shadow streamed across the restless region of his thoughts, was arrested like a suspicious-looking person in a besieged city, brought to account for itself, and treated with an attention which the mere suggestion of casual fancy could hardly deserve. It is perhaps in this sense that the human heart is said in scripture to be abominably wicked, since not only without our will, but in positive opposition to our best exertions, sinful suggestions profane the thoughts of the wisest, and foul emotions sully the heart of the most pure. The wise and well-informed shrink with horror from the phantoms of guilt which thus intrude themselves, and pray to heaven for strength to enable them to reject such pollution from their thoughts, and for power to fix their attention upon better objects. But the dark dread of his possible exclusion from the pale of the righteous rushed ever and anon with such vivid force on the mind of the unfortunate Bunyan, as to make him accept for fatal arguments against himself, the wildest and most transitory coinage of his own fancy, while, to fill up every pause, he was tortured by the equally terrible suspicion that he was guilty of the most unpardonable of

crimes, as an habitual doubter of the efficacy of divine grace.

"In an evil hour (says Southey) were the doctrines of the Gospel sophisticated with questions which should have been left in the schools for those who are unwise enough to employ themselves in excogitations of useless subtlety! Many are the poor creatures whom such questions have driven to despair and madness, and suicide; and no one ever more narrowly escaped from such a catastrophe than Bunyan."

In this state of anxiety and agony, the victim of his own ingenuity in self-torment, unable to escape from the idea that he was forsaken of God—that he was predestinated to eternal reprobation—that the scriptures, the source of joy and comfort to others, were to him only as a roll like that seen by Ezekiel, full of curses and denunciations of evil—John Bunyan was at length induced to lay his case open to the teacher of the anabaptist congregation—Gifford by name, a good man, we doubt not, but little qualified to give sound advice to such a mind so tortured. He had been a soldier among the royalists, and a sad profligate, and was now settled down into about as wild an enthusiastic as our tinker himself. He advised his proselyte to receive no religious conviction or calling as indisputable, which had not been confirmed to his individual self by evidence from Heaven!

Bunyan had ere now formed to himself an hypothesis accounting for the blasphemous thoughts which distracted his mind, imputing them, in short, to the immediate suggestion of the devil; and how he clung to it we may discover from one striking passage in Christian's progress through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

"One thing I would not let slip: I took notice that now poor Christian was so confounded, that he did not know his own voice; and thus I perceived it: just when he was come over against the mouth of the burning pit, one of the wicked ones got behind him, and stepped up softly to him, and whisperingly suggested many grievous blasphemies to him, which he verily thought had proceeded from his own mind. This put Christian more to it than anything that he met with before, even to think that he should now blaspheme him that he loved so much before; yet, if he could have helped it, he would not have done it; but he had not the discretion either to stop his ears, or to know from whence these blasphemies came."—P. 83.

Thus furnished with a theory to account for the black suggestions which (as he says) he dared not to utter, either

with word or pen, Bunyan was now taught by his mistaken pastor to look for a counter-balance in the equally direct inspirations of Heaven. So strong is the power of the human imagination, that he who seriously expects to see miracles, does not long expect them in vain. He spent hours in debating whether, in the strength of newly adopted faith, he should not command the puddles on the highway to be dry, and the dry places to be wet; and if he shrunk from so presumptuous an experiment, it was only because he had not courage to think of facing the despair which must have ensued, if the sign, which he would fain have demanded, had been refused to his prayer. Mr. Southey thus describes his condition, while engaged in balancing the support and comfort which he received from Heaven with the discountenance and criminal suggestions inspired by the enemy of mankind:

"Shaken continually thus by the hot and cold fits of a spiritual ague, his imagination was wrought to a state of excitement in which its own shapings became vivid as realities, and affected him more forcibly than impressions from the eternal world. He heard sounds as in a dream; and as in a dream held conversations which were inwardly audible, though no sounds were uttered, and had all the connection and coherency of an actual dialogue. Real they were to him in the impression which they made, and in their lasting effect; and even afterwards, when his soul was at peace, he believed them, in cool and sober reflection, to have been more than natural. Some days he was much 'followed,' he says, by these words of the Gospel, 'Simon, Simon, behold Satan has desired to have you!' He knew that it was a voice from within, —and yet it was so articulately distinct, so loud, and called, as he says, so strongly after him, that once in particular, when the words Simon! Simon! rung in his ears, he verily thought some man had called to him from a distance behind, and though it was not his name, supposed nevertheless, that it was addressed to him, and looked round suddenly to see by whom. As this had been the loudest, so it was the last time that the call sounded in his ears; and he imputes it to his ignorance and foolishness at that time, that he knew not the reason of it; for soon, he says, he was feelingly convinced that it was sent from heaven, as an alarm, for him to provide against the coming storm,—a storm which 'handled him twenty times worse than all he had met with before.'"—P. 25.

The hideous apprehensions of unpardonable crimes committed, and eternal judgment incurred, were from time to time dispelled by texts and promises of scripture, borne in upon the mind of the sufferer with a force so totally irresistible, as, to him at least, had the appearance of undoubted

inspiration; and in these violent alternations of mood passed nearly three years of Bunyan's life. He attained at length a more tranquil state of spirit from the practice which he finally adopted, of reading over his Bible with the utmost care and attention, observing how the different passages bore upon and explained each other; and, to use his own expression, "with careful heart and watchful eye, with great fearfulness to turn over every leaf, and with much diligence, mixed with trembling, to consider every sentence with its natural force and latitude." The result of this minute and systematic investigation of the scriptures could not but have had a tranquillizing and composing effect on the mind of a man, whose sum of guilt consisted rather in the involuntary intrusion of wicked thoughts, than in the breaking of any known laws or desertion of any acknowledged duty; for his youthful sins of ignorance had been long ere now renounced. He now looked upon the gospel system with more comprehensive views—"he saw that it was good;" and although he retained highly enthusiastic opinions concerning the earlier part of his religious career, the same doubts and difficulties do not seem to have disturbed his more advanced or his closing life.

Mr. Scott, a former editor of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, thought it not advisable to dwell upon the fanaticism which characterizes the first part of Bunyan's religious life. Mr. Southey, on the contrary, is of opinion, that

> "His character would be imperfectly understood, and could not be justly appreciated, if this part of his history were kept out of sight. To respect him as he deserves—to admire him as he ought to be admired—it is necessary that we should be informed, not only of the coarseness and brutality of his youth, but of the extreme ignorance out of which he worked his way, and the stage of burning enthusiasm through which he passed—a passage not less terrible than that of his own Pilgrim in the Valley of the Shadow of Death."—P. xiv.

We are much of the opinion thus forcibly expressed. The history of a man so distinguished by natural talents as Bunyan, is connected with that of his age; nor can we so well conceive the dangers of fanaticism, as when we behold the struggles of so pure and so powerful a spirit involved in its toils. It may be easily supposed, that, of those around him, there were many who fell into the same temptations, and struggled with them in vain; and that, in not a few in-

stances, the doctrine which summoned all men to the exercise of the private judgment, as it was called, led the way to the wildest, most blasphemous, and most fatal excesses. Don Quixote's balsam was not a more perilous medicine.

Of this Southey gives one instance, in the case of a poor man, who, having the merit of being amongst the first whose conversation called Bunyan to a sense of religion, was himself so unable to endure the illumination of which he conveyed the earliest spark to so notable a person, that he became a Ranter, and wallowed in the foulest vice, as one who imagined himself secure of his election, and whom, consequently, the grossest sin could not debar from predestined happiness. This unfortunate man loved to tell Bunyan that he had run through all religions, and, in his persuasion, had fallen upon the right way at last; a way, namely, which, in assuring to him an unalienable right to heaven, freed him from observing any limits in the indulgence of his passions during the time he remained on earth. Another instance of the moral danger of indulging such reveries as wrecked the peace of Bunyan for three years, though, fortunately, they were unable either to corrupt his heart, or to unsettle his reason, was seen in one of his contemporaries, Lawrence Claxton by name, whose rare treatise, containing the impudent avowal of his vicious life, lies now before us, and is so apposite to the subject as to claim some notice. This person was prevailed upon, so late as 1660, at the instigation, he says, "of a man of no mean parts or parentage in this Reason's Kingdom, who had much importuned him to that effect, to publish the various leadings forth of his spirit through each dispensation, from the year 1630 to the year 1660;" in order that, as Mr. Claxton expresses it,* "he might appear stripped stark naked of his former formal

* This rare tract is termed, at length, "The Lost Sheep Found; or the Prodigal returned to his Father's House, after many a sad and weary Journey through many Religious Countries. Where now, notwithstanding all his former Transgressions and Breach of his Father's commands, he is received in all Eternal Favours, and all the Righteous and Wicked Men that he hath left behind reserved for Eternal Mercy. As, also, every Church or Dispensation may read, in his Travels, their portion after this Life. By Lawrence Claxton, the only true converted Messenger of Jesus Christ, Creator of Heaven and Earth. London, printed for the Author, 1660."

righteousness and professed wickedness, and, instead thereof, clothed with innocency of life, perfect assurance, and sight for discerning by the spirit of the Revelation." Our limits, as well as our inclinations, render it impossible for us to give more than a very general analysis. Some of Claxton's debaucheries are too coarse and indecent to permit them being more than indicated. Yet it may not be useless to trace the career of a man, who started under a vague apprehension of an extreme tenderness of conscience, afflicted "with the toleration of Maypole-dancing and rioting," and ascended from one flight to another till he became, in principle, a materialist, almost an atheist, and in practice a coarse and profligate latitudinarian.

His reformation commenced with an abhorrence to railed altars, the Common Prayer-Book, and the "Practice of Piety," together with an envy of those of his own sentiments who exercised with credit a gift of extemporary prayer. In a word, he was a Presbyterian puritan. His next quarrel was with the Presbyterians themselves, whose system, he now perceived, differed only from the Episcopal in a few insignificant rites and ceremonies. He also was, or affected to be, displeased with their eagerness in pressing on the Civil War. He therefore left them for the Independents; and, attaching himself particularly to one Dr. Crisp, became an antinomian, or express disciple of those who protested against being still considered as under the laws of the decalogue. Presently, however, Lawrence Claxton discovered that, as he phrases it, he was still burning bricks in Egypt, and had not as yet come within view of that uncircumscribed liberty of conscience which it was his aim to obtain. Hereupon he took to the pulpit; where, if his own word can be taken, he turned out not inferior to any preacher of that time. By-and-bye he was put in possession of a parish named Pulem, with a pension of forty shillings weekly; in which position, as he expresses himself, he thought himself very gallantly provided for; "so that," says he, "I thought I was in heaven upon earth; judging, the priests had a brave time in this world, to have a house built for them, and means provided for them, to tell the people stories of other men's works." But from this paradise he was removed in about half-a-year, by the envy of the neighbouring clergy, as he insinuates, who called him sheep-stealer, for robbing them

of their flocks by his superior gifts. His character had probably overtaken him, for his congregation and he parted with contempt on both sides.

The fifth stage of his history exhibits Claxton as leading a rambling unsettled life, in the course of which he commenced Dipper or Anabaptist. He resided at Robert Marchant's, who had four daughters, of which he seems to have had the handsomest for his wife or concubine. Claxton was now apprehended by Parliament; but after remaining in custody six months, it appears he formally renounced the practice of dipping, and by this sacrifice of his opinions procured his liberty.

Sixthly, he joined a society of people called Seekers, who worshipped only by prayer and preaching; in which new character he sent out a book, having something in the title analogous to the celebrated work of Bunyan, to wit, "The Pilgrimage of Saints, by Church cast out, in Christ found seeking truth." "This being," he says, "a suitable piece of work in these days, wounded the churchers." At length this unhappy man came the length of affirming, that it was thought and not action which constituted guilt, and therefore if one practised any unlawful act under the belief that it was no sin, to him it became pure and lawful. He was now what was called a *Ranter*, and chief of a company who professed and practised, always under an affectation of religion, the grossest immorality; they had attained, they thought, in this outrageous license, the true privilege of enlightened minds. The ground of Claxton's faith at this period was, that all things being created originally good, nothing was evil but as the opinion of men made it so; under which belief he apprehended there was no such thing as a theft, a cheat, or a lie, and accordingly (murder excepted) this precious proselyte broke the law in every respect without scruple. If the least doubt entered his mind he washed it away, he tells us, with a cup of wine. In London, with his female associates, he spent his time in feasting and drinking, "so that taverns I called the house of God, the drawers ministers, and sack divinity." This extravagant conduct once more scandalized and offended the Parliament, especially the Presbyterians; Claxton was again taken into custody, and at length formally banished from the British islands.

He escaped, however, and forthwith endeavoured to con-

ceal himself under another species of imposture,—he aspired to the art of magic, and having found, as he says,—

"Some of Dr. Ward's and Woolerd's manuscripts, I improved my genius to fetch back goods that were stolen—yea, to raise spirits and fetch treasure out of the earth. However, miseries I gained; and was up and down looked upon as a dangerous man; and therefore have several times in vain attempted to raise the devil, that I might see what like he was, but all in vain; so that I judged all was a lie, and that there was no devil at all, nor, indeed, no God neither, save one, Nature."

Our philosopher, in short, had now found out that the Scriptures were contradictory, that the world was eternal, and arrived at the point of believing neither in revelation, redemption, nor resurrection. To this dreadful result was he conducted by the bewildered principles of his metaphysical theology, though he does not stop there any more than at any former stage of his deluded journey, but settles in becoming a follower of the prophet Reeves, and, as he has the audacity to call himself, "the only true converted messenger of the Deity." Such were the effects on different men of the then prevailing audacity of fanaticism. The same course of study which all but fixed Bunyan in religious despair, hurried into profligacy and atheism the less favourably constituted mind of Claxton.

The religious terrors of Bunyan had been considerably checked by his constant course of scriptural study; but there can be no doubt that he owed much to a new occupation, which necessarily fixed his attention upon the minds of others, instead of permitting him to indulge in his own reveries. His habitual serious habits and undenied purity of life had not escaped the observation of the congregation of which he was a member, who passed a resolution, after the death of their pastor, Gifford, that some of the brethren (*one at a time*, as is not injudiciously provided), to whom the Lord may have given a gift, and among others, John Bunyan, be called forth to speak a word or two for mutual edification. Full of scriptural thoughts and language, and having the Scriptures themselves at command, the author of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, was, nevertheless, totally void of that confidence which made so many in those days rush *per saltum* on the task of the preacher. He laboured painfully that he might speak persuasively. His attention to his new duties seems, in some degree, to have relieved his own

dubious state of mind; yet he flinched not from the task of preaching the same severely Calvinistic doctrine under the strictness of which he himself still groaned internally. The following are his own remarkable expressions:—

"'This part of my work,' says he, 'I fulfilled with great sense; for the terrors of the law, and guilt for my transgressions, lay heavy upon my conscience. I preached what I felt—what I smartingly did feel—even that under which my poor soul did groan and tremble to astonishment. Indeed, I have been as one sent to them from the dead. I went myself in chains to preach to them in chains; and carried that fire in my own conscience that I persuaded them to be aware of. I can truly say, that when I have been to preach, I have gone full of guilt and terror even to the pulpit door, and there it hath been taken off, and I have been at liberty in my mind until I have done my work; and then immediately, even before I could get down the pulpit stairs, I have been as bad as I was before. Yet God carried me on, but surely with a strong hand; for neither guilt nor hell could take me off my work.'"—P. xlviii.

Besides his preaching, in which he seems now to have acted as a kind of volunteer auxiliary to one John Burton, he was also engaged in religious controversy, and that with the then frantic Quakers, who, thanks to time and toleration, have now settled down into the gentlest and mildest of religionists. Bunyan accused the Quakers of denying some of the most essential doctrines of Christianity; and Edward Burroughs, his antagonist, objected to our author his taking reward for his services, and going shares with his principal, Burton, in £150, which he affirms was received as that pastor's yearly salary. To this charge Bunyan returned an explicit denial, alleging that he wrought with his hands for his daily living, and for that of his family, and solemnly affirming, that he distributed the knowledge which God had given him freely, and not for filthy lucre's sake.

The Quakers could only attack his principles and his character; but the persecuting spirit which had, by a not unnatural reaction, taken possession for a time of the government, imposed direct personal and penal consequences for nonconformity. Considerable efforts were made after the restoration for the suppression of these sectaries, who were held as the principal cause of the late civil war, and of the death of Charles I. John Bunyan was cited before the justices as a person in the habit of going about preaching, although the charge does not appear to have been mingled

with any specific impeachment of his political or religious opinions. He refused to find security to abstain from his itinerant ministry, and he was, of course, sent to prison, resigned and contented with his captivity, so—"it might be the awakening of the saints in the country, or otherwise serve the cause of vital religion." The fruit of his submission to the will of God was probably a state of peace of mind and contentment, such as in his lifetime he had not hitherto enjoyed.

This persecution was no sudden storm, which was to pour forth its violence, and then be hushed to rest. Bunyan dwelt no less than twelve years in Bedford jail rather than surrender the liberty of preaching, which he considered as his birth-right; and the manner in which he employed his leisure during this seclusion constitutes his great distinction as a benefactor to the Christian world; this he has expressed himself, in the first sentence of his memorable work:—"As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where there was a den, where I laid me down to sleep; and as I slept I dreamed a dream." The allegorical den is on the margin explained to be the *prison* where the author sustained so many years' confinement.

It is true, Bunyan's captivity was neither rigorous nor continued. He was, indeed, deprived of the power of working at his usual occupation of a tinker. "He was as effectually taken away from his pots and kettles," says one of his former biographers, "as the Apostles were from mending their nets;" but he learned to make tagged thread laces, and thus supported his family by the labour of his hands. The jailer of Bedford was a "gentle provost," and at length he indulged his respected prisoner with all, and more than all, the liberty which he could grant with safety to himself. John Bunyan was suffered to go abroad at pleasure, visited the various assemblies of his sect, and was actually chosen pastor of the Anabaptist congregation in the town. He accepted the office, and being thus only a prisoner on parole, he appears to have been able to exercise its duties freely and usefully—for as it is well expressed by Mr. Southey—"the fever of his enthusiasm had spent itself; the asperity of his opinions had softened as his mind enlarged."

About sixteen years before his death, in 1672, he was at length released entirely from a confinement which, for at

least five years, had been in a great degree nominal. After this his life passed smoothly. His reputation as a preacher stood very high, even in the metropolis, where the chapels were crowded to overflowing when his appearance was expected. A chapel was built for him near Bedford, and he often frequented another at a place called Bentick, where the pulpit which he used is still preserved with pious care. We cannot see in the sermons which Bunyan has left any strong marks of the genius which he really possessed, but the fashion of them is strange to the present day. His elocution must have been warm and fervent; and he himself even distrusted the degree of applause which he excited.

"One day when he had preached 'with peculiar warmth and enlargement,' some of his friends came to shake hands with him after the service, and observed to him 'what a sweet sermon' he had delivered. 'Ay!' he replied, 'you need not remind me of that; for the Devil told me of it before I was out of the pulpit.' This anecdote authenticates itself."

He died at no very late period of life, from the consequences of a labour of friendship. He had undertaken a journey to prevail upon a friend not to disinherit his son; caught cold in returning to London, and was carried off by a fever. His epitaph is in these words:—

"Mr. John Bunyan, Author of the Pilgrim's Progress, ob. 12 Aug. 1688, æt. 60.

The Pilgrim's Progress now is finished,
And death has laid him in his earthly bed."

Of the first appearance of this celebrated parable, Mr. Southey's diligence has preserved the following notices:—

"It is not known in what year the *Pilgrim's Progress* was first published, no copy of the first edition having as yet been discovered: the second is in the British Museum; it is "with additions," and its date is 1678: but as the book is known to have been written during Bunyan's imprisonment, which terminated in 1672, it was probably published before his release, or, at latest, immediately after it. The earliest with which Mr. Major has been able to supply me, either by means of his own diligent inquiries, or the kindness of his friends, is that 'eighth e-di-ti-on' so humorously introduced by Gay, and printed—not for Ni-cho-las Bod-ding-ton, but for Nathanael Ponder, at the Peacock in the Poultrey, near the Church, 1682; for whom also the ninth was published in 1684, and the tenth in 1685. All these no doubt were large impressions."

When the astonishing success of the *Pilgrim's Progress* had raised a swarm of imitators, the author himself, ac-

cording to the frequent fashion of the world, was accused of plagiarism, to which he made an indignant reply, in what he considered as verses, prefixed to his *Holy War*.

> "Some say the Pilgrim's Progress is not mine,
> Insinuating as if I would shine
> In name and fame by the worth of another,
> Like some made rich by robbing of their brother;
> Or that so fond I am of being Sire,
> I'll father bastards; or, if need require,
> I'll tell a lye in print, to get applause.—
> I scorn it; John such dirt-heap never was,
> Since God converted him. Let this suffice
> To show why I my Pilgrim patronise.
>
> "It came from mine own heart, so to my head,
> And thence into my fingers trickled;
> Then to my pen, from whence immediately
> On paper I did dribble it daintily."—P. lxxxix.

Mr. Southey has carefully examined this charge of supposed imitation, in which so much rests upon the very simplicity of the conception of the story, and has successfully shown that the tinker of Elstow could not have profited by one or two allegories in the French and Flemish languages —works which he could have had hardly a chance to meet with; which, if thrown in his way he could not have read; and, finally, which, if he had read them, could scarcely have supplied him with a single hint. Mr. Southey, however, has not mentioned a work in English, of Bunyan's own time, and from which, certainly, the general notion of his allegory might have been taken. The work we allude to is now before us, entitled "The Parable of the Pilgrim, written to a friend, by Symon Patrick, D. D., Dean of Peterborough;" —the same learned person, well known by his theological writings, and successively bishop of Chichester and Ely. This worthy man's inscription is dated the 14th of December, 1672; and Mr. Southey's widest conjecture will hardly allow an earlier date for Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, 1672 being the very year in which he was enlarged from prison. The language of Dr. Patrick, in addressing his friend, excludes the possibility of his having borrowed from John Bunyan's celebrated work. He apologizes for sending to his acquaintance one in the oldfashioned dress of a pilgrim; and says he found among the works of a late writer, Baker's Sancta Sophia, a short discourse, under the name of a Para-

ble of a Pilgrim; "which was so agreeable to the portion of fancy he was endowed with, that he presently thought that a work of this nature would be very grateful to his friend also." It appears that the Parable of a Pilgrim, so sketched by Dr. Patrick, remained for some years in the possession of the private friend for whom it was drawn up, until, it being supposed by others that the work might be of general utility, it was at length published in 1678. Before that year the first edition of the *Pilgrim's Progress* had unquestionably made its appearance; but we equally acquit the Dean of Peterborough and the tinker of Elstow from copying a thought or idea from each other. If Dr. Patrick had seen the *Pilgrim's Progress* he would, probably, in the pride of academic learning, have scorned to adopt it as a model; but, at all events, as a man of worth, he would never have denied the obligation if he had incurred one. John Bunyan, on his part, would in all likelihood have scorned, "with his very heels," to borrow anything from a dean; and we are satisfied that he would have cut his hand off rather than written the introductory verses we have quoted, had not his Pilgrim been entirely his own.

Indeed, whoever will take the trouble of comparing the two works which, turning upon nearly the same allegory, and bearing very similar titles, came into existence at or about the very same time, will plainly see their total dissimilarity. Bunyan's is a close and continued allegory, in which the metaphorical fiction is sustained with all the minuteness of a real story. In Dr. Patrick's the same plan is generally announced as arising from the earnest longing of a traveller, whom he calls Philotheus or Theophilus, whose desires are fixed on journeying to Jerusalem as a pilgrim. After much distressing uncertainty, caused by the contentions of pretended guides, who recommend different routes, he is at length recommended to a safe and intelligent one. Theophilus hastens to put himself under his pilotage, and the good man gives forth his instructions for the way, and in abundant detail, so that all the dangers of error and indifferent company may be securely avoided; but in all this, very little care is taken even to preserve the appearance of the allegory—in a word, you have, almost in plain terms, the moral and religious precepts necessary to be observed in the actual course of a moral and religious life. The pilgrim,

indeed, sets out upon his journey, but it is only in order again to meet with his guide, who launches further into whole chapters of instructions, with scarcely a reply from the passive pupil. It is needless to point out the extreme difference between this strain of continued didactics, rather encumbered than enlivened by a starting metaphor, which, generally quite lost sight of, the author recollects every now and then, as if by accident,—and the thoroughly life-like manner in which John Bunyan puts the adventures of his pilgrim before us. Two circumstances alone strike us as trenching somewhat on the manner of him of Elstow: the one is where the guide awakens some sluggish pilgrims, whom he finds sleeping by the way;* the other is where their way is crossed by two horsemen, who insist upon assuming the office of guide. "The one is a pleasing talker, excellent company by reason of his pleasant humour, and of a carriage very pleasant and inviting. But they observed he had a sword by his side, and a pair of pistols before him, together with another instrument hanging at his belt, which was formed for pulling out of eyes."† The pilgrims suspected this well-armed cavalier to be one of that brood who will force others into their own path, and then put out their eyes in case they should forsake it. They have not got rid of their dangerous companion, by whom the Romish church is indicated, when they are accosted by a man of a quite different shape and humour, "more sad and melancholy, more rude, and of a heavier wit also, who crossed their way on the right hand." He also (representing, doubtless, the Presbyterians or Sectaries) pressed them with eagerness to accept his guidance, and did little less than menace them with total destruction if they should reject it. A dagger and a pocket-pistol, though less openly and ostentatiously disposed than the arms of the first cavalier, seem ready for the same purposes; and he, therefore, is repulsed, as well as his neighbour. These are the only passages in which the church dignitary might be thought to have caught for a moment the spirit of the tinker of Bedford. Through the rest of his parable, which fills a well-sized quarto volume, the dean no doubt evinces considerable learning, but, compared to Bun-

* Parable of the Pilgrim, Chapter xxx.
† *Ibidem*, Chapter xxxiv.

yan, may rank with the dullest of all possible doctors; "a worthy neighbour, indeed, and a marvellous good bowler,—but for Alexander, you see how 'tis." Yet Dr. Patrick had the applause of his own time. The first edition of his Parable appeared, as has been mentioned, in 1678; and the *sixth*, which now lies before us, is dated 1687.*

Mr. Southey introduces the following just eulogium on our classic of the common people:—

"Bunyan was confident in his own powers of expression; he says,

> ——————'thine only way
> Before them all, is to say out thy say
> In thine own native language, which no man
> Now useth, nor with ease dissemble can.'

And he might well be confident in it. His is a homespun style, not a manufactured one: and what a difference is there between its homeliness and the flippant vulgarity of the Roger L'Estrange and Tom Brown school! If it is not a well of English undefiled, to which the poet as well as the philologist must repair, if they would drink of the living waters, it is a clear stream of current English,—the vernacular speech of his age, sometimes indeed in its rusticity and coarseness, but always in its plainness and its strength. To this natural style Bunyan is in some degree beholden for his general popularity;—his language is everywhere level to the most ignorant reader, and to the meanest capacity: there is a homely reality about it; a nursery tale is not more intelligible, in its manner of narration, to a child. Another cause of his popularity is, that he taxes the imagination as little as the understanding. The vividness of his own, which, as his history shows, sometimes could not distinguish ideal impressions from actual ones, occasioned this. He saw the things of which he was writing as distinctly with his mind's eye as if they were indeed passing before him in a dream. And the reader perhaps sees them more satisfactorily to himself, because the outline only of the picture is presented to him, and the author having made no attempt to fill up the details, every reader supplies them according to the measure and scope of his own intellectual and imaginative powers."—Pp. lxxxviii. lxxxix.

It may be added to these judicious remarks, that the most pleasing occupation of the fine arts being to awaken and excite the imagination, sketches in drawing, simple melo-

* The poet laureat may, perhaps, like to hear that Dr. Patrick introduces into his parable a very tolerable edition of that legend of the roasted fowls recalled to life by St. James of Compostella, of which he himself has recently given us so lively and amusing a metrical version.

dies in music, a bold, decisive, but light-touched strain of poetry or narrative in literary composition (like what is called in the green-room the *touch and go* method of acting), will always be more likely to gain extensive popularity than any more highly-wrought performance, which aspires to afford the mind no exercise save that of admiration, which pretends at once to rouse curiosity by the outline, and to satiate it by distinct, accurate circumstantiality of detail. To understand this, we need only remember having been the visitor of some celebrated scene of natural beauty, under the close guardianship of a pragmatical guide, who will let you find out nothing independent of him, and is so anxious that you should leave nothing unseen, that he makes you almost wish yourself both deaf and blind, that you may neither hear his instructions nor profit by them. The true rule of grace in description and narrative—the *ne quid nimis*—is one which genius often neglects in its pride of luxuriance, and seldom without paying the penalty in popular opinion.

It is not, however, the words and manner of the *Pilgrim's Progress* alone which have raised that singular allegory to so high a rank among our general readers. The form and style of composition is safely referred to the highest authority—

> "Who spake in parables, I dare not say,
> But sure *He* knew it was a pleasing way."

And, without dwelling on the precedent suggested by the poet, we may observe how often the allegory, or parable, has gained, without suspicion, those passes of the human heart which were vigilantly guarded against the direct force of truth by self-interest, prejudice, or pride. When the prophet approached the sinful monarch with the intention of reproving his murder and adultery, a direct annunciation of his purpose might have awakened the king to wrath, instead of that penitence to which it was the will of Heaven that he should be invited. But David listened unsuspectingly to the parable of the ewe-lamb; and it was not till the awful words—"*Thou art the man*"—were uttered, that he found the crime which he had so readily condemned was, in fact, the type of that which he had himself committed. In this respect, the comparing the parable with the real facts which it intimates, is like the practice of the artists to examine the reflection of their paintings in a mirror, that they may get

clear of false lights and shadows, and judge of their compositions more accurately by seeing them presented under a change of light and circumstances. But, besides the moral uses of this species of composition, it has much in it to exercise those faculties of the human mind which it is most agreeable to keep in motion. Our judgment is engaged in weighing and measuring the points of similarity between the reality and the metaphor as these evolve themselves, and fancy is no less amused by the unexpected, surprising, and, we may even say, the witty turns of thought, through means of which associations are produced between things which, in themselves, seemed diametrically opposed and irreconcilable, but which the allegorist has contrived should nevertheless illustrate each other. In some cases, the parable possesses the interest of the riddle itself; the examination and solution of which are so interesting to the human intellect, that the history and religious doctrines of ancient nations were often at once preserved and disguised in the form of such ænigmata.

In a style of composition rendered thus venerable by its antiquity, and still more so by the purposes to which it has been applied, John Bunyan, however uneducated, was a distinguished master. For our part, we are inclined to allow him, in the simplicity of his story, and his very shrewdness, and, if the reader pleases, homely bluntness of style, a superiority over the great poet to whom he has been compared by D'Israeli,—which, considering both writers as allegorists, may, in some respect, counterbalance the advantages of a mind fraught with education, a head full of poetic flight and grace—in a word, the various, the unutterable distinction between the friend of Sidney and of Raleigh, the fascinating poet of fairy land, and our obscure tinker of Elstow, the self-erected holder-forth to the Anabaptists of Bedford. Either has told a tale expressive of the progress of religion and morality—Spenser's under the guise of a romance of chivalry, while that of Bunyan recalls the outline of a popular fairy tale, with its machinery of giants, dwarfs, and enchanters. So far they resemble each other; and if the later writer must allow the earlier the advantage of a richer imagination, and a taste incalculably more cultivated, the uneducated man of the people may, in return, claim over Spenser the superiority due to a more simple and better concocted

plan, from which he has suffered no temptation to lead him astray.

This will appear more evident, if we observe that Spenser (the first book, perhaps, excepted, where he has traced, in the adventures of the Red-cross Knight, with considerable accuracy, the history and changes of the Christian world) has, in other cantos, suffered his story to lead him astray from his moral, and engages his knights, by whom we are to understand the abstract virtues, in tilts and tournaments, not to be easily reconciled with the explanation of the allegory. What are we to understand by Britomart overthrowing Arthegal, if we regard the lady as the representative of chastity, and the knight as that of justice? Many discrepancies of the same kind could be pointed out; and probably some readers may agree with us in thinking that those passages of the poem are sometimes not the least amusing in which Spenser forgets his allegory, and becomes a mere romancer like Ariosto. But, besides the allegory by which Spenser designs to present the pageant of the moral virtues, assigning a knight as the representative of each virtue, by whom the opposing appetites should be curbed and overthrown; he has embodied in his story a second and political allegory. Not only is Gloriana the imaginary concentration of the glory sought by every true knight—she is Queen Elizabeth too; not only does King Arthur present the spirit and essence of pure chivalry—he is likewise Spenser's (unworthy) patron, the Earl of Leicester; and many of the adventures which describe the struggles of virtue and vice also shadow forth anecdotes and intrigues of the English court, invisible to those, as Spenser himself insinuates,

"Who n'ote without a hound fine footing trace."

This complication of meanings may render the Faëry Queene doubly valuable to the antiquary who can explore its secret sense; but it must always be an objection to Spenser's plan, with the common reader, that the attempt at too much ingenuity has marred the simplicity of his allegory, and deprived it, in a great degree, of consistency and coherence.

In this essential point the poet is greatly inferior to the prose allegorist: indeed they write with very different notions of the importance of their subject. Spenser desired,

no doubt, to aid the cause of virtue, but it was in the character of a cold and unimpassioned moralist, easily seduced from that part of his task by the desire to pay a compliment to some courtier, or some lady, or the mere wish to give a wider scope to his own fancy. Bunyan, on the contrary, in recommending his own religious opinions to the readers of his romance, was impressed throughout with the sense of the sacred importance of the task for which he had lived through poverty and captivity, and was, we doubt not, prepared to die. To gain the favour of Charles and all his court he would not, we are confident, have guided Christian one foot off the narrow and strait path; and his excellence above Spenser's is, that his powerful thoughts were all directed to one solemn end, and his fertile imagination taxed for everything which could give life and vivacity to his narrative, vigour and consistency to the spirit of his allegory. His every thought is turned to strengthen and confirm the reasoning on which his argument depends; and nothing is more admirable than the acuteness of that fancy with which, still keeping an eye on his principal purpose, Bunyan contrives to extract, from the slightest particulars, the means of extending and fortifying its impression.

Let us, for example, compare Bunyan to a good man, but common-place writer, the author of the rival parable. Dr. Patrick's Pilgrim, in the thirty-second chapter, falls in with "a company of select friends, who are met at a frugal, but handsome dinner." This incident suggests to the worthy guide the praises of sociable mirth, restrained by temperance and sobriety. When Bunyan, on the contrary, has occasion to mention an entertainment, instead of the cold generality of the Dean of Peterborough, every dish which he places on the table is in itself a scriptural parable; and the precise nature of the refreshment, while described with the vivacious seeming accuracy of Le Sage or Cervantes, is found, on referring to the texts indicated, to have an explicit connection with some striking particular of Holy Writ. At the house of Gaius, for example, not only the wine red as blood, the milk "well crumbed," the apples and nuts, but the carving of the table, and ordering of the salt and trenchers, have each their especial and typical meaning; and while the reader only hears of the entertainment of Dr. Patrick, he seems to feed at that of John Bunyan, and sit a guest to

profit by the conversation.* Unquestionably this desire to keep so close to, and hunt down, as it were, the metaphor, may sometimes be held trifling and tedious: but it is a far better fault than that neglect of his machinery which is most likely to enfeeble the texture of a less gifted allegorist.

The parable of the Pilgrim's Progress is, of course, tinged with the tenets of the author, who might be called a Calvinist in every respect, save his aversion to the institution of a regular and ordained clergy. To these tenets he has, of course, adapted the Pilgrimage of Christian, in the incidents which occur, and opinions which are expressed. The final condemnation of Ignorance, for instance, who is consigned to the infernal regions when asking admittance to the celestial city, because unable to produce a certificate of his calling, conveys the same severe doctrine of fatalism which had wellnigh overturned the reason of Bunyan himself. But the work is not of a controversial character—it might be perused without offence by sober-minded Christians of all persuasions; and we all know that it is read universally, and has been translated into many languages. It, indeed, appears from many passages in Bunyan's writings, that there was nothing which he dreaded so much as divisions amongst sincere Christians.

"Since you would know (he says) by what name I would be distinguished from others, I tell you, I would be, and hope I am, a *Christian;* and choose, if God should count me worthy, to be called *a Christian*, *a Believer*, or other such name which is approved by the Holy Ghost. And as for those factious titles of Anabaptists, Independents, Presbyterians, or the like, I conclude that they come neither from Jerusalem nor from Antioch, but rather from Hell and Babylon; for they naturally tend to divisions. You may know them by their fruits."—P. lxxvii.

Mr. Southey, observing with what general accuracy this apostle of the people writes the English language, notwithstanding all the disadvantages under which his youth must have been passed, pauses to notice one gross and repeated error. "The vulgarism alluded to," says the laureate, "consists in the almost uniform use of *a* for *have*—never marked as a contraction, *e.g.* might *a* made me take heed—like to *a* been smothered." Under favour, however, this is a sin against orthography rather than grammar: the tinker

* Pilgrim's Progress, p. 344.

of Elstow only spelt according to the pronunciation of the verb *to have*, then common in his class; and the same form appears a hundred times in Shakspeare. We must not here omit to mention the skill with which Mr. Southey has restored much of Bunyan's masculine and idiomatic English, which had been gradually dropped out of successive impressions by careless, or unfaithful, or, what is as bad, conceited correctors of the press.

The speedy popularity of the Pilgrim's Progress had the natural effect of inducing Bunyan again to indulge the vein of allegory in which his warm imagination and clear and forcible expression had procured him such success. Under this impression, he produced the second part of his Pilgrim's Progress; and well says Mr. Southey, that none but those who have acquired the ill habit of always reading critically, can feel it as a clog upon the first. The first part is, indeed, one of those delightfully simple and captivating tales which, as soon as finished, we are not unwilling to begin again. Even the adult becomes himself like the child who cannot be satisfied with the repetition of a favourite tale, but harasses the story-telling aunt or nurse, to know more of the incidents and characters. In this respect Bunyan has contrived a contrast, which, far from exhausting his subject, opens new sources of attraction, and adds to the original impression. The Pilgrimage of Christiana, her friend Mercy, and her children, commands sympathy at least as powerful as that of Christian himself, and it materially adds to the interest which we have taken in the progress of the husband, to trace the effects produced by similar events in the case of women and children.

"There is a pleasure," says the learned editor, "in travelling with another companion the same ground—a pleasure of reminiscence, neither inferior in kind or degree to that which is derived from a first impression. The characters are judiciously marked: that of Mercy, particularly, is sketched with an admirable grace and simplicity; nor do we read of any with equal interest, excepting that of Ruth in Scripture, so beautifully, on all occasions, does the Mercy of John Bunyan unfold modest humility regarding her own merits, and tender veneration for the matron Christiana."

The distinctions between the first and second part of the *Pilgrim's Progress* are such as circumstances render appropriate; and as John Bunyan's strong mother wit enabled

him to seize upon correctly. Christian, for example, a man, and a bold one, is represented as enduring his fatigues, trials, and combats, by his own stout courage, under the blessing of Heaven: but to express that species of inspired heroism by which women are supported in the path of duty, notwithstanding the natural feebleness and timidity of their nature, Christiana and Mercy obtain from the Interpreter their guide, called Great-heart, by whose strength and valour their lack of both is supplied, and the dangers and distresses of the way repelled and overcome.

The author hints, at the end of the second part, as if "it might be his lot to go this way again;" nor was his mind that light species of soil which could be exhausted by two crops. But he left to another and very inferior hand the task of composing a third part, containing the adventures of one Tender Conscience, far unworthy to be bound up, as it sometimes is, with John Bunyan's matchless parable.

Bunyan, however, added another work to those by which he was already distinguished:—this was "The Holy War made by King Shaddai upon Diabolus for the regaining of the metropolis of the World; or, the losing and retaking of Mansoul." In this allegory the fall of man is figured under the type of a flourishing city, reduced under the tyranny of the giant Diabolus, or the Prince of Evil; and recovered, after a tedious siege, by Immanuel, the son of Shaddai, its founder and true lord. A late reverend editor of this work has said that "Mr. Bunyan was better qualified than most ministers to treat this subject with propriety, having been himself a soldier, and knowing by experience the evils and hardships of war. He displays throughout his accurate knowledge of the Bible and its distinguished doctrines; his deep acquaintance with the human heart, and its desperate wickedness; his knowledge of the devices of Satan, and of the prejudices of the carnal mind against the Gospel."* To this panegyric we entirely subscribe, except that we do not see that Bunyan has made much use of any military knowledge which he might possess. Mansoul is attacked by mounts, slings, and battering-rams—weapons out of date at the time of our civil wars; and we can only trace the author's soldierly experience in his referring to the points of war

* Burder's Edition of the Holy War, 1824.

then performed, as "Boot and saddle," "Horse and away," and so forth. Indeed, the greatest risk which he seems to have incurred, in his military capacity, was one somewhat resembling the escape of Sir Roger de Coverley's ancestor at Worcester, who was saved from the slaughter of that action by having been absent from the field. In like manner, Bunyan, having been appointed to attend at the siege of Leicester, a fellow-soldier volunteered to perform the service in his stead, and was there slain. Upon the whole, though the *Holy War* be a work of great ingenuity, it wants the simplicity and intense interest which are the charm of the *Pilgrim's Progress.*

Mr. Burder (the editor last mentioned) remarks, that Bunyan maintains his allegory by assigning to his characters such significant names as introduce them with singular propriety. This was a qualification in great request among the authors of fictitious composition, whether narrative or dramatic, in Charles the Second's days; and, no doubt, many artificers of plays and novels in our own time would be inclined to join Falstaff, though rather in a different sense, in his earnest wish that he knew where "a commodity of good names was to be purchased." A happily christened list of dramatis personæ is a key-note for the easy introduction of the story, and saves the author the trouble of tagging his characters with descriptions, always somewhat awkward, of person and disposition. In some respects it answers the purpose which Texier was wont to achieve in another way. Those who remember, like ourselves, that distinguished reader of the French comedians (and such treats are not easily forgotten), cannot but recollect, that on first reading over the list of characters, with the author's short description annexed, M. Texier assumed in each the voice and manner in which he intended to read the part; and so wonderful was his discrimination, that the most obtuse hearer had never afterwards the least difficulty in ascertaining who was speaking. A happy selection of names has somewhat the same effect in placing the characters who bear them before us in their original concoction.

It is no doubt true, that this may be coarsely and inartificially attempted, so as at once to destroy the reality of the tale. When the thrice noble, illustrious, and excellent princess, as the titlepage calls her, the Duchess of Newcastle,

produces on the stage such personages as Sir Mercury Poet, the Lady Fancy, Sir William Sage, Lady Virtue, and Mimic—the jest is as flat and dull as that of Snug, the joiner, when he acts the lion bare-faced. On the other hand, some authors produce names, either real or approaching to reality, which nevertheless possess that resemblance to the character which has all the effect of wit, and, by its happy coincidence with the narrative, greatly enhances the pleasure of the reader. Thus, in the excellent novel of *Marriage*, an elderly dowager, who deals in telling her neighbours disagreeable truths, which she calls "speaking her mind," is very happily Mrs. *Downe Wright*. Anstey, also, whose genius in this line was particular, gives us a list of company, of each of whom we form a distinct and individual idea from the name alone:—

> "With old Lady Towzer,
> And Marshal Carouser,
> Came the great Hanoverian Baron Panmouzer."

We might also mention the widow Quicklackit, with "little Bob Jerome, old Chrysostom's son," or the parties in the country-dance, where the contrasts of stature, complexion, and age, are conveyed by little more than the names:—

> "Miss Curd had a partner as black as Omiah;
> Kitty Tit shook her heels with old Doctor Goliah;
> While little John Trot, like a pony just nicked,
> With long Dolly Louderhead scampered and kicked."

Other, and those very distinguished authors, have not ventured to push this resemblance between the names and characters of their personages so far. An ominous and unpleasing epithet, a jarring and boding collocation of consonants, form the names of their villains; as, for instance, who could expect anything good from a Blifil? The heroes and heroines, on the contrary, rejoice in the softest, and, at the same time, the most aristocratic names,—such as aspirants to the actual stage select for a first appearance.

Without permitting our remarks on this head to lead us further astray from the subject, we shall only observe, that Bunyan was indifferent to other points so his names were expressive. Mr. Penny-wise-pound-foolish is not a happy name, and still less Mr. Wise-in-the-hundred-and-fool-in-the-shire, but they serve to keep the allegory before the reader's mind. On the other hand, Mrs. Bat's-eyes, Mr. Ready-to-

halt, and Much-afraid, his daughter, Fair-speech, By-ends, and the rest, without being very improbable, have the same advantage of maintaining the reader's attention to the author's meaning. As an apology for the length and singular composition of such names as Valiant-for-the-truth, Dare-not-lie, and the like, the reader must remember, that it was the custom of that puritanical age to impose texts and religious sentences, for examples of which we may refer to the rolls of Praise-God-Barebones' parliament.*

In these observations we have never touched upon Bunyan's poetry—an omission for which the good man, had he been alive, would scarce have thanked us, for he had a considerable notion of his gift that way, though his present editor is of opinion that John modelled his verses upon those of Robert Wisdom, a degree more prosaic than the effusions of Sternhold and Hopkins. His mechanical education prevented his access to better models: and of verse he knew nothing but the necessity of tagging syllables of a certain amount with very slovenly rhymes. Mr. Southey has revived some specimens of verses written by Bunyan (with great self-approbation doubtless) upon the leaves of Fox's *Book of Martyrs*. These "Tincker's tetrastics," as Southey calls them, may rank, in idea and expression, with the basest doggrel. But his later poetry excels this humble model; he had learned to soar beyond Robert Wisdom, when he was able to express himself thus in recommendation of the Pilgrim's Progress.

"Wouldst thou divert thyself from melancholy?
Wouldst thou be pleasant, yet be far from folly?
Wouldst thou read riddles and their explanation?
Or else be drowned in thy contemplation?
Dost thou love picking meat? Or wouldst thou see
A man i' the clouds, and hear him speak to thee?
Wouldst thou be in a dream, and yet not sleep?
Or wouldst thou in a moment laugh and weep?
Wouldst thou loose thyself and catch no harm,
And find thyself again without a charm?
Wouldst read thyself, and read thou know'st not what?
And yet know whether thou art blest or not,
By reading the same lines? O then come hither!
And lay my book, thy head, and heart together."—P. 9.

* That worthy's own brother may perhaps furnish not the worst specimen. He wrote himself, "If-the-Lord-help-me-not-I-am-damned;" but, for shortness, was commonly called "Damned Barebones."

In these lines, though carelessly and roughly formed, there are both ideas and powers of expression. Another little sonnet, taken in connection with the scene of repose, in the prose narrative, has a simplicity which approaches elegance. It occurs on the entrance of the Pilgrim into the valley of Humiliation.

"Now, as they were going along and talking, they espied a boy feeding his father's sheep. The boy was in very mean clothes, but of a fresh and well-favoured countenance, and as he sat by himself, he sung. 'Hark,' said Mr. Great-heart, 'to what the shepherd's boy saith!' So they harkened, and he said,—

'He that is down needs fear no fall;
He that is low no pride;
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.
'I am content with what I have,
Little be it or much!
And, Lord! contentment still I crave,
Because thou savest such.
'Fulness to such a burden is,
That go on pilgrimage;
Here little, and hereafter bliss,
Is best from age to age.'

"Then said their guide, 'Do you hear him? I will dare to say, this boy lives a merrier life, and wears more of that herb called *heart's ease* in his bosom, than he that is clad in silk and velvet.'"
—Pp. 311, 312.

We must not omit to mention, that this edition of the *Pilgrim's Progress* is adorned with a great variety of woodcuts, designed and executed with singular felicity, and with some highly finished engravings, after the rich and imaginative pencil of John Martin. Thus decorated, and recommended by the taste and criticism of Mr. Southey, it might seem certain that the established favourite of the common people should be well received among the upper classes; as, however, it contains many passages eminently faulty in point of taste (as, indeed, from the origin and situation of the author, was naturally to be expected), we should not be surprised if it were more coldly accepted than its merits deserve. A dead fly can corrupt a precious elixir—an obvious fault against taste, especially if it be of a kind which lies open to lively ridicule, may be enough, in a critical age like the present, to cancel the merit of wit, beauty, and sublimity.

In whatever shape presented, John Bunyan's parable must be dear to many, as to us, from the recollection that in

youth they were endued with permission to peruse it at times when all studies of a nature merely entertaining were prohibited. We remember with interest the passages where, in our childhood, we stumbled betwixt the literal story and metaphorical explanation; and can even recall to mind a more simple and early period, when Grim and Slaygood, and even he

> "Whose castle's Doubting, and whose name's Despair,"

were to us as literal Anakim as those destroyed by Giant-killing Jack. Those who can recollect the early development of their own ideas on such subjects, will many of them at the same time remember the reading of this work as the first task which gave exercise to the mind, before taste, grown too fastidious for enjoyment, taught them to be more disgusted with a single error than delighted with a hundred beauties.

GODWIN'S FLEETWOOD.*

[Edinburgh Review, 1805.]

WHOEVER has read *Caleb Williams*, and there are probably few, even amongst those addicted to graver studies, who have not perused that celebrated work, must necessarily be eager to see another romance from the hand of the same author. Of this anxiety we acknowledge we partook to a considerable degree; not, indeed, that we had any great pleasure in recollecting the conduct and nature of the story, for murders, and chains, and dungeons, and indictments, trial and execution, have no particular charms for us, either in fiction or in reality. Neither is it on account of the moral proposed by the author, which, in direct opposition to that of the worthy chaplain of Newgate, seems to be, not that a man guilty of theft or murder is in some danger of being hanged, but that, by a strange concurrence of circumstances, he may be regularly conducted to the gallows for theft or murder which he has never committed. There is nothing instructive or consolatory in this proposition when taken by itself; and if intended as a reproach upon the laws of this country, it is equally applicable to all human judicatures, whose judges can only decide according to evidence, since the Supreme Being has reserved to himself the prerogative of searching the heart and of trying the reins. But, although the story of *Caleb Williams* be unpleasing, and the moral sufficiently mischievous, we acknowledge we have met with few novels which excited a more powerful interest. Several scenes are painted with the savage force of Salvator Rosa; and, while the author pauses to reason upon the feelings and motives of the actors, our sense of the fallacy of his arguments, of the improbability of his facts, and of the frequent

* *Fleetwood: or the New Man of Feeling.* By WILLIAM GODWIN.

inconsistency of his characters, is lost in the solemnity and suspense with which we expect the evolution of the tale of mystery. After *Caleb Williams* it would be injustice to Mr. Godwin to mention *St. Leon*, where the marvellous is employed too frequently to excite wonder, and the terrible is introduced till we have become familiar with terror. The description of Bethlem Gabor, however, recalled to our mind the author of *Caleb Williams;* nor, upon the whole, was the romance such as could have been written by quite an ordinary pen. These preliminary remarks are not entirely misplaced, as will appear from the following quotation from the preface to *Fleetwood.*

"One caution I have particularly sought to exercise: 'not to repeat myself.' *Caleb Williams* was a story of very surprising and uncommon events, but which was supposed to be entirely within the laws and established course of nature, as she operates in the planet we inhabit. The story of *St. Leon* is of the miraculous class; and its design, to 'mix human feelings and passions with incredible situations, and thus render them impressive and interesting.'

"Some of those fastidious readers—they may be classed among the best friends an author has, if their admonitions are judiciously considered—who are willing to discover those faults which do not offer themselves to every eye, have remarked, that both these tales are in a vicious style of writing; that Horace has long ago decided, that the story we cannot believe, we are, by all the laws of criticism, called upon to hate; and that even the adventures of the honest secretary, who was first heard of ten years ago, are so much out of the usual road, that not one reader in a million can ever fear they will happen to himself."—Vol. i. *Pref.*

Moved by these considerations, Mr. Godwin has chosen a tale of domestic life, consisting of such incidents as usually occur in the present state of society, diversified only by ingenuity of selection, and novelty of detail. How far he has been successful, will best appear from a sketch of the story.

Fleetwood, the only son of a gentleman who has retired from mercantile concerns to the enjoyment of a liberal fortune, is born and educated among the mountains of Wales. He has no companions saving his father, an infirm though very respectable old gentleman, and his tutor, who was *not* a clergyman; notwithstanding which, he studied Plato without understanding him, and indemnified himself by writing sonnets which could be understood by nobody. Fleetwood being of course a passionate admirer of the beauties of nature, preferred scrambling over the heights of Cader Idris,

adoring the rising, and admiring the setting sun, to perusing the pages of Plato, and the poetry of his tutor. In one of these rambles, somewhat to the reader's relief, whose patience is rather tired by an unfruitful description of precipices, cascades, and the immeasurable ocean in the background, he at length meets with an adventure. A lamb, a favourite lamb, falls into a lake; the shepherd plunges in after the lamb; an aged peasant, his father, is about to plunge in after the shepherd, when Fleetwood, as might have been expected, anticipates his affectionate intentions. After remaining a reasonable time in the water, the shepherd holding the lamb, and Fleetwood supporting the shepherd, they are all three fished up by an interesting young damsel who approaches in a boat, and proves to be (according to good old usage) the mistress of William the shepherd, and the proprietor of the half-drowned favourite. This adventure leads to nothing, except that, in the conclusion of the work, the interesting young woman unexpectedly pops back upon us in the very useful, though not very romantic character of an old sick-nurse; deserving no less, in her advanced age, the praises of the Institution for Relief of the Destitute Sick, than in her youth she had merited a premium from the Humane Society. The worthy tutor, in like manner, vanishes entirely from our view, retiring to an obscure lodging in a narrow street, to finish his book of sonnets, and his commentary on Plato. His pupil is now introduced to the knowledge of mankind at the University. Here he discovers no aversion to distinguish himself among the dissipated sons of fortune, and soon becomes something very different from the climber of mountains and diver into lakes. But he acquits himself of all share in a *quizzing* scene, played off upon a *freshman* called Withers, who had written a tragedy on a very interesting subject—the cleansing of the Augean stable. This piece he is prevailed upon to recite to certain arch wags, who receive it with rapture, fill the author drunk, and bear him home, crowned with parsley, and dropping with wine, in classical triumph. They have afterwards the address to pass a wooden figure upon him for the master of his college, who, after a rebuke pronounced in character by one of the quizzers, who chanced to be a ventriloquist, proceeds, by some unknown mechanism, to inflict upon Withers the academical discipline under which Milton is

said to have smarted of yore; but, far from imitating the submission of his sublime prototype, the modern bard kicked and cuffed in stout opposition, till he discovered the impassible character of his antagonist. The joke ends by Withers going mad, and the ingenious authors of his distress being rusticated. We presume the ventriloquist found a refuge with Fitz-James, and the mechanist with Merlin or Maillardet. What connection this facetious tale has with Fleetwood, or his history, does not appear; but we reverence the established privilege of an Oxonian to prose about all that happened when he was at Christ-Church.

We now accompany Fleetwood on his travels. Paris was his first stage, where he had the strange and uncommon misfortune to be jilted by two mistresses. The first was a certain marchioness, whose mind "resembled an eel," and who delighted in the bold, the intrepid, and the masculine. Her lover was greeted with an impudent Amazonian stare, a smack of the whip, a slap on the back, and a loud and unexpected accent that made the hearer start again. Upon discovering the infidelity of this gentle lady, Fleetwood, being in Paris, followed the example of the Parisians, but not without experiencing certain twinges of pain, and revolutions of astonishment, to which we believe these good people, on such occasions, are usually strangers. In a word, he took another mistress. The Countess de B. had every gentle amiability under heaven, and only one fault, which might be expressed in one word, if we chose it, but we prefer the more prolix explanation of the author.

"Yet the passion of the countess was rather an abstract propensity, than the preference of an individual. A given quantity of personal merit and accomplished manners was sure to charm her. A fresh and agreeable complexion, a sparkling eye, a well-turned leg, a grace in dancing or in performing the manœuvres of gallantry, were claims that the Countess de B. was never known to resist."—Vol. i, p. 152.

Upon discovery of this frailty, our hero's patience forsook him; and he raved, fumed, and agonized, till ours likewise was on the verge of departure. In this paroxysm, his taste for the mountain and desert returned upon him like a frenzy; and as there were none nearer than the Alps, to the Alps he flies incontinently on the wings of despair. He repairs to the mansion of a venerable old Swiss gentleman, a friend

of his father, delightfully situated in the valley of Ursereen, in a wood of tall and venerable trees; a very extraordinary and fortunate circumstance for the possessor, as we will venture to say that it is the only wood that ever grew in that celebrated valley, which is the highest inhabited ground in the Alps. The host of Fleetwood carries him to a pleasure party on the lake of Uri, and chooses that time and place to acquaint him, that while he was living jollily at Paris, his father had taken the opportunity of dying quietly in Merionethshire.* The effect of this intelligence upon Fleetwood is inexpressibly striking. He ate no breakfast the next morning; and it was not till the arrival of dinner, that "hunger at length subdued the obstinacy of his grief." Ruffigny, his host, now joins him; and after a reasonable allowance of sympathy and consolation, entertains him with the history of his connection with his father.

Ruffigny, left in infancy to the guardianship of a wicked uncle who thirsted after his inheritance, had been trepanned to Lyons, and bound apprentice to a silk-weaver, or rather employed in the more laborious part of his drudgery. His feelings, on being gradually subjected to this monotonous and degrading labour, are very well described, as also the enthusiastic resolution which he forms, of throwing himself at the feet of the King of France, whom the boy had pictured to himself like the Henry and the Francis, the heroes of the legendary tales of his country. His escape, his journey, his disappointment, have all the same style of merit; and it is in such painting, where the subject is actuated by some wild, uncommon, or unnatural strain of passion and feeling, that we conceive Mr. Godwin's peculiar talent to lie. At Paris, the deserted Ruffigny is patronized by Fleetwood, the grandfather of our hero; and his future connection with that family is marked with reciprocal acts of that romantic generosity, which is so common in novels, and so very rare in real life.

The main narrative is now resumed. Ruffigny accompanies Fleetwood on his return to England, where he finds

* By the way, we greatly question the locality here pitched on. We know of no such lake as the lake of Uri; but we suppose the lake of Lucerne, a lake of the four cantons, was the scene of this affecting discovery. But Mr. Godwin is not much at home in Switzerland.

in his paternal dwelling "an empty mansion and a tenanted grave." Notwithstanding his grief for his father's death, he is on the point of forming a connection with a bewitching Mrs. Comorin (*quære* Cormorant?) who had lately cohabited with Lord Mandeville, but having quarrelled with her admirer, had a heart and person vacant for the first suitable offer. This naughty affair is interrupted by the precipitate retreat of Ruffigny, who, not choosing to be present where such matters were going forward, was in full march towards Switzerland, when he is recalled, by Fleetwood's consent, to sacrifice his young mistress to his old friend. After this period, the story flags insufferably. Fleetwood, like King Solomon of yore, tries the various resources of travelling, society, literature, politics, and farming, and, with him, pronounces them all vanity and vexation of spirit. In this vain pursuit, he becomes a confirmed old bachelor; and the interest of the story, contrary to that of every other novel, commences when he exchanges this unprofitable state for that of matrimony.

This grand step he is induced to take by the disinterested arguments of Mr. Macneil, a shrewd Scotchman, whom he meets on the lakes of Cumberland, and who at that very moment had four unmarried daughters upon his hands. The accomplishments of these damsels were rather overshadowed by some peculiarities in the history of their mother. This lady, when very young, had, while in Italy, married her music-master, who gave her no small reason to repent her choice. Macneil delivered her from the tyranny of this ungrateful musician, who had immured her in a ruinous castle, his hereditary mansion! That she gave her deliverer her heart was natural enough, but she also bestowed upon him her hand, to which the deserted minstrel had an unalienable claim. The ladies on the lakes of Cumberland, judging that two husbands was an unreasonable allowance, declined intercourse with the fair monopolist. Macniel was therefore about to return to Italy, where he had vested his whole fortune in the hands of a banker of Genoa; but, upon the fervent suit of Fleetwood, he agreed that his youngest daughter, Mary, should remain in England. He himself, with his wife and three eldest daughters, proceed on their voyage, leaving Mary a visitor in a family at London. The vessel in which the Macneils had embarked is wrecked in

the bay of Biscay, and all that unfortunate family perish in the waves. This disastrous intelligence is nearly a death-blow to poor Mary, the sole survivor, and to whom her mother and sisters had hitherto been all in all. The Genoese banker, finding that no vouchers of his being the depository of Macneil's fortune had escaped from the wreck, refuses to give any account of it; and our interest in Mary's distress and desolation is unnecessarily interrupted by a minute detail of the steps by which Fleetwood in vain attempted to bring a banker to confess the receipt of a sum which could not otherwise be proved against him. It is even hinted, as a reason for which he pressed his marriage with the deserted orphan, that he at length became afraid that, since the question rested on a trial of character betwixt him and the Genoese, he might himself be suspected of having embezzled her fortune. This is one of the instances of coarseness and bad taste with which Mr. Godwin sometimes degrades his characters. In *Caleb Williams*, a gentleman passionately addicted to the manners of ancient chivalry, becomes a midnight assassin, when an honourable revenge was in his power; and in *Fleetwood*, a man of feeling, in soliciting an union pressed upon him by love, by honour, and by every feeling of humanity, is influenced by a motive of remote and despicable calculation, which we will venture to say never entered the head of an honest man in similar circumstances.

Fleetwood and Mary are at length married; and from this marriage, as we have already noticed, commences any interest which we take in the history of the former. Indeed it can hardly be called a history, which has neither incident nor novelty of remark to recommend it, consisting entirely of idle and inflated declamations upon the most common occurrences of human life. The union of Mary and Fleetwood, considering the youth and variable spirits of the former, and the age and confirmed prejudices of the latter, promises a more interesting subject of speculation. Upon their arrival in Wales, the reader is soon made sensible that a man of feeling, upon Mr. Godwin's system, is the most selfish animal in the universe. We appeal to our fair readers if this is not a just conclusion, from the following account of the matrimonial disputes of this ill-matched pair. Upon visiting the family mansion in Merionethshire, the lady gives the first cause of disgust, by rather hastily appropriating to

her own purposes a closet which had been the favourite retirement of her husband. Without having the force of mind to tell Mary that this unlucky *boudoir* was consecrated to his own studies, Fleetwood nourishes a kind of secret malice against his wife for her unlucky selection of this retreat, hallowed as it had been to his own exclusive use. This is hardly over when a new offence is given. While our hero is reading to his young bride his favourite play, "A Wife for a Month," (in fact he did not retain his own for many more,) Mary, either from natural levity, or because the ardent declamations of the amorous Valerio excited comparisons unfavourable to Fleetwood, chooses to desert the rehearsal in order to botanize with a young peasant on the cliffs of Cader Idris. Now, there is nothing unnatural in this incident, and we believe domestic felicity is frequently interrupted by such differences of taste, and neglect of the feelings of each other; but we doubt whether our readers will not think the tragic declamations of Fleetwood infinitely too high-toned for the nature of his misfortunes. It is not very pleasant to lose possession of a favourite closet, and it is teasing enough to be deserted while reciting a favourite author; but, surely, the *sesquipedalia verba* of Fleetwood attach to these grievances a degree of consequence in which none can sympathize, and which to most will be the subject of ridicule. Another cause of dispute, of a still more important as well as of a more common kind, arises betwixt Fleetwood and Mary. This concerns the share to be taken in the visits and public society of the country in which they lived. Mary's fondness for these amusements excites the displeasure, and at length the jealousy of her husband; and he expresses both, with very great indulgence to his own feelings, and very little to those of his lady. In these circumstances her health began to give way, under the perpetual irritation occasioned by the deportment of her moody partner; and her mind settled in mournful recollection upon the contemplation of the loss she had sustained by the shipwreck of her sisters and parents. We transcribe the following account of the progress of her malady as one of the few interesting passages in the book.

"One further circumstance occurred in the progress of Mary's distemper. She would steal from her bed in the middle of the night, when no one perceived it, and make her escàpe out of the

house. The first time this accident occurred I was exceedingly alarmed. I awoke, and found that the beloved of my soul was gone. I sought her in her closet, in the parlour, and in the library; I then called up the servants. The night was dark and tempestuous; the wind blew a hollow blast; and the surges roared and stormed as they buffeted against the hurricane. A sort of sleet blew sharp in our faces when we opened the door of the house. I went myself in one direction, and despatched the servants in others, to call and search for their mistress. After two hours she was brought back by one of my people, who, having sought in vain at a distance, had discovered her, on his return, not far from the house. Her hair was dishevelled; her countenance as white as death; her limbs cold; she was languid and speechless. We got her as quickly as we could to bed.

"This happened a second time. At length I extorted her secret from her—she had been to the beach of the sea to seek the bodies of her parents. On the sea-shore she seemed to converse with their spirits. She owned, she had been tempted to plunge herself into the waves to meet them. She heard their voices speaking to her in the hollow wind, and saw their faces riding on the top of the waves by the light of the moon, as it peeped precariously through the storm. They called to her, and bid her come along, and chid her for her delay. The words at first sounded softly, so that it seemed difficult to hear them, but afterward changed to the most dolorous and piercing shrieks. In the last instance, a figure had approached her, and, seizing her garment, detained her just as she was going to launch herself into the element. The servants talked something of a gentleman, who had quitted Mary precisely as they came up to conduct her home.

"She confessed, that whenever the equinoctial wind sounded in her ears, it gave a sudden turn to her blood and spirits. As she listened alone to the roaring of the ocean, her parents and her sisters immediately stood before her. More than once she had been awaked at midnight by the well-known sound; and, looking out of bed, she saw their bodies strewed on the floor, distended with the element that filled them, and their features distorted with death. This spectacle she could not endure. She had crept silently out of bed, and, drawing a few clothes about her, had found her way into the air. She felt nothing of the storm; and, led on by an impulse she could not resist, had turned her steps towards the sea."—Vol. iii, pp. 79–82.

This kind of partial derangement of the intellect is very strikingly described. It has not, however, the merit of novelty, as the same idea occurs in the licentious novel of *Faublas*, written by the famous Louvet. At the conclusion of that work the hero tells us, that still when the south wind whistled, or the thunder rolled, his disordered imagination presented to him the scene which had passed at the death of his mistress; he again heard the sound of the midnight bell, and the voice of the sentinel who pointed to the river,

and coldly said, "She is there." We quote from memory, a work which, for many reasons, we would not wish to read again; but we think that this is the import of the passage, and it considerably resembles that in *Fleetwood*, though the idea in the latter is more prolonged and brought out.

Mary is removed to Bath, where she recovers from her depression of spirits, to fall into the opposite extreme of giddy and unceasing hilarity. At this time Fleetwood is joined by two cousins, both under his patronage, and who come to reside in his family. They are half brothers. Kenrick is an open, candid, thoughtless, young soldier; Gifford a deep hypocritical villain. These two brothers, like the black and white genius in Voltaire's tale, attend Fleetwood through the rest of the book, and are the causes of the good and bad fortune which befall him. Gifford contrives to insinuate into the mind of his patron a suspicion of the virtue of Mary, which is strengthened by her being in reality the confidante of Kenrick, to whom he artfully represents her as unlawfully attached. This plot, in itself rather threadbare, is not, in the present instance, managed with uncommon felicity. The circumstances which excite the suspicions, and finally the furious rage of Fleetwood, are such as usually occur in such cases; but when he drives his pregnant spouse out of his house, he carries his jealous resentment to a most disgusting excess. We can pardon the vehemence of Othello, who kills his wife outright; but, in exposing a destitute orphan to all the miseries of poverty and beggary, we humbly think Fleetwood merits any title better than that of a man of feeling. At the same time that he has been guilty of this outrage, he continues distractedly fond of his wife, as will plainly appear from the following scene enacted upon the Continent, whither he had retired from the scene of his supposed disgrace and actual misery. He ordered wax models to be made, so as to represent his wife and her supposed seducer, with a barrel-organ modulated to the tunes which they used to play and sing together. These were to be produced on the anniversary of his wedding-night.

"When at length the 15th of July came, I caused a supper of cold meats to be prepared, and spread in an apartment of my hotel. All the materials which I had procured with so much care and expense, were shut up in the closets of this apartment. I locked

myself in, and drew them forth one after another. At each interval of the ceremony, I seated myself in a chair, my arms folded, my eyes fixed, and gazed on the object before me in all the luxury of despair. When the whole was arranged, I returned to my seat, and continued there a long time. I then had recourse to my organ, and played the different tunes it was formed to repeat. Never had madness in any age or country so voluptuous a banquet.

"I have a very imperfect recollection of the conclusion of this scene. For a long time I was slow and deliberate in my operations. Suddenly my temper changed. While I was playing on my organ one of the tunes of Kenrick and Mary—it was a duet of love: the mistress, in a languishing and tender style, charged her lover with indifference; the lover threw himself at her feet, and poured out his soul in terms of adoration. My mind underwent a strange revolution. I no longer distinctly knew where I was, or could distinguish fiction from reality. I looked wildly and with glassy eyes all round the room; I gazed at the figure of Mary; I thought it was, and it was not, Mary. With mad and idle action I put some provisions on her plate; I bowed to her in mockery, and invited her to eat. Then again I grew serious and vehement; I addressed her with inward and convulsive accents in the language of reproach; I declaimed with uncommon flow of words upon her abandoned and infernal deceit; all the tropes that imagination ever supplied to the tongue of man seemed to be at my command. I know not whether this speech was to be considered as earnest, or as the Sardonic and bitter jest of a maniac. But, while I was still speaking, I saw her move—if I live, I saw it. She turned her eyes this way and that; she grinned and chattered at me. I looked from her to the other figure; that grinned and chattered too. Instantly a full and proper madness seized me; I grinned and chattered in turn to the figures before me. It was not words that I heard or uttered; it was murmurs and hissings, and lowings and howls. I became furious. I dashed the organ into a thousand fragments. I rent the child-bed linen, and tore it with my teeth. I dragged the clothes which Mary had worn, from off the figure that represented her, and rent them into long strips and shreds. I struck the figures vehemently with the chairs and other furniture of the room, till they were broken to pieces. I threw at them, in despite, the plates and other brittle instruments of the supper-table. I raved and roared with all the power of my voice. I must have made a noise like hell broke loose; but I had given my valet a charge that I should not be intruded upon; and he, who was one of the tallest and strongest of men, and who ever executed his orders literally, obstinately defended the door of my chamber against all inquisitiveness. At the time, this behaviour of his I regarded as fidelity; it will be accounted for hereafter. He was the tool of Gifford; he had orders that I should not be disturbed; it was hoped that this scene would be the conclusion of my existence. I am firmly persuaded that, in the last hour or two, I suffered tortures not inferior to those which the North American savages inflict on their victims; and, like those victims, when the apparatus of torture was suspended, I sunk into immediate insensibility. In this state I was found, with all the lights of the apart-

ment extinguished, when, at last, the seemingly stupid exactness of my valet gave way to the impatience of others, and they broke open the door."—Vol. ii, pp. 248-253.

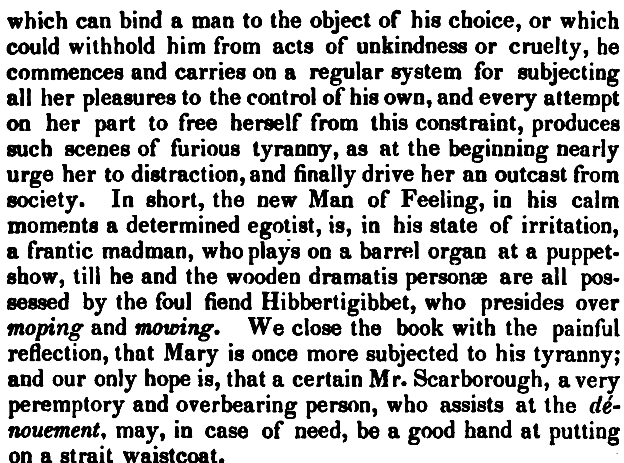
The rest of the story may be comprised in a few words. Gifford, whom Fleetwood had constituted his heir, becomes impatient to enter upon possession; and, finding his patron's constitution proof against mental distress, he attempts, with the assistance of two ruffians, to murder him in the forest of Fontainbleau. As *all* Fleetwood's servants were in Gifford's pay, they saw this transaction take place without interference—a circumstance which struck their master so forcibly, that, while the ruffians were dragging him into the wood, he was considering whether it be one of the effects of wealth, that with it we engage persons in our service to murder us. The solution of this problem, as well as the consummation of Gifford's crime, is interrupted by the arrival of some horsemen, who rescue Fleetwood, and make the assailants prisoners. That Kenrick was his preserver will be readily anticipated by all who are acquainted with the good old beaten track of novels on these occasions; and to do Mr. Godwin justice, he has seldom taken a by-path from one end of this performance to the other. Gifford is consigned to the gallows, which he had merited; the clouds of jealousy, which had obscured the mind of Fleetwood, are gradually dispelled; every suspicious circumstance is accounted for; and after some hesitation (very natural, we think) on the part of Mary, she is again united to the Man of Feeling.

Having occupied so much room in detailing the story, we have but little left for animadversion. The incidents during the two first volumes are chiefly those of the common life of a man of fashion; and all that is remarkable in the tale is the laboured extravagance of sentiment which is attached to these ordinary occurrences. There is no attempt to describe the minuter and finer shades of feeling; none of that high finishing of description, by which the most ordinary incidents are rendered interesting: on the contrary, the effect is always sought to be brought out by the application of the inflated language of high passion. It is no doubt true, that a man of sensibility will be deeply affected by what appears trifling to the rest of mankind; a scene of distress or of pleasure will make a deeper impression upon him than upon another; and

it is precisely in this respect that he differs from the rest of mankind. But a man who is transported with rage, with despair, with anger, and all the furious impulses of passion, upon the most common occurrences of life, is not a man of sentiment, but a madman; and, far from sympathizing with his feelings, we are only surprised at his having the liberty of indulging them beyond the precincts of Bedlam.

In the third volume, something of a regular story commences, and the attention of the reader becomes fixed by the narrative. But the unnatural atrocity of Gifford, and the inadequate means by which he is so nearly successful, render this part of the tale rather improbable. The credulity of Fleetwood is unnecessarily excessive, and might have been avoided by a more artful management of incident.

But we have another and a more heavy objection to him, considered as a man of feeling. We have been accustomed to associate with our ideas of this character the amiable virtues of a Harley, feeling deeply the distresses of others, and patient, though not insensible of his own. But Fleetwood, through the whole three volumes which bear his name, feels absolutely and exclusively for one individual, and that individnal is Fleetwood himself. Indeed he is at great pains, in various places, to tell us that he had been uncontrolled in his youth, was little accustomed to contradiction, and could not brook anything which interfered either with his established habits, or the dispositions of the moment. Accordingly his despair for the loss of his two French mistresses, is the despair of a man who loses something which he thinks necessary to his happiness and in a way not very soothing to his feelings; but as we understand him, he can no more be properly said to be in love with either of these fair ladies, than a hungry man, according to Fielding's comparison, can be said to be in love with a shoulder of Welsh mutton. In like manner, his pursuit after happiness, through various scenes, is uniformly directed by the narrow principle of self-gratification; there is no aspiration towards promoting the public advantage, or the happiness of individuals; Mr. Fleetwood moves calmly forward in quest of what may make Mr. Fleetwood happy; and, like all other egotists of this class, he providentially misses his aim. But it is chiefly in the wedded state that his irritable and selfish habits are most completely depicted. With every tie, moral and divine,



which can bind a man to the object of his choice, or which could withhold him from acts of unkindness or cruelty, he commences and carries on a regular system for subjecting all her pleasures to the control of his own, and every attempt on her part to free herself from this constraint, produces such scenes of furious tyranny, as at the beginning nearly urge her to distraction, and finally drive her an outcast from society. In short, the new Man of Feeling, in his calm moments a determined egotist, is, in his state of irritation, a frantic madman, who plays on a barrel organ at a puppet-show, till he and the wooden dramatis personæ are all possessed by the foul fiend Hibbertigibbet, who presides over *moping* and *mowing*. We close the book with the painful reflection, that Mary is once more subjected to his tyranny; and our only hope is, that a certain Mr. Scarborough, a very peremptory and overbearing person, who assists at the *dénouement*, may, in case of need, be a good hand at putting on a strait waistcoat.

CUMBERLAND'S JOHN DE LANCASTER.*

[Quarterly Review, 1809.]

MR. CUMBERLAND has now borne arms in the fields of literature for more than half a century:† the nature of his service has been as various as its date has been protracted; nor has his warfare been without its success and its honours. If he has never been found in the very van and front of battle, he has seldom lagged in the rear; and although we cannot find that he has on any occasion brought home the *spolia opima*, or qualified himself for the grand triumph, it must be allowed that he has often merited and obtained the humbler meed of an ovation. His dramatic pieces are those on which his fame will hereafter most probably rest. But the "Terence of England, the mender of hearts," unsatisfied with having made more than one successful effort in modern comedy, perhaps the most difficult of all compositions, seemed determined to show us that his vein though fertile was not inexhaustible, and that the friend of Garrick, of Goldsmith, and of Johnson, could write plays fit only to be prefatory to the more important matter of *Mother Goose*. These must be forgotten ere the author of the *West Indian*, the *Brothers*, the *Jew*, and the *Wheel of Fortune*, can enjoy his full honours; but we can comfort him with the assurance that the date of their memory is already nearly expired. As a periodical writer, Mr. Cumberland's classical learning and accurate taste, his beautiful and flowing style, and the pleasing subjects on which he usually loves to employ himself, compensate in some degree for want of depth of thought,

* *John de Lancaster, a Novel.* By RICHARD CUMBERLAND, Esq. 3 Vols.

† Mr. Cumberland died 7th May, 1811, in his eightieth year, and was interred in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey.

or novelty of conception. It is hardly possible to speak too highly of his translations from Aristophanes and the ancient Greek fragments; they are not only equal but superior, to anything of the kind in our language, and so great is our respect for the author of these exquisite versions, that we will not say a single word of his original poetry.

But it is as a novelist that we are at present to examine Mr. Cumberland's literary powers. We cannot place *Arundel* and *Henry* on the same shelf with the works of Fielding or Smollet, and we are the less inclined to do so, as the latter novel, being a close imitation of *Tom Jones*, serves particularly to show the wide difference between the authors. Yet Mr. Cumberland's novels rank far above the usual stock in trade of the circulating library, are written in easy and elegant language, and evince considerable powers of observing generic, though not individual, characters. Excepting Smollet alone, whose sailors are, moreover, of a more ancient and rugged school, none has better delineated the characteristic and professional traits of the British navy, than Mr. Cumberland. The mission to Spain filled his portfolio with interesting sketches of that people, and of the persecuted Jews, who yet reside amongst them, which we often trace in his novels, tales, and dramatic labours. The works of former authors he has laid liberally under contribution, and sometimes new-dressed their characters so well, as to give them an air of originality. Thus Ephraim Daw, in *Henry*, is a methodistical Parson Adams, having the same simplicity of character, the same goodness of heart, and the same disposition to use the carnal arm in a good cause, qualified by the enthusiastic tenets and language of the sect from which the author derives him. It is therefore, we repeat, rather in delineating a species than an individual that the art of Mr. Cumberland consists, so far as it is original, the distinguishing personal features which he introduces being usually borrowed from others. Indeed we know but two remarkable peculiarities of taste in manners and incident which are completely his own, and run through all his works. The first is an odd and rather unnatural transfer of the task of courtship from the hero to the heroine of the piece. Mr. Cumberland seems to have found an inexpressible charm in exchanging the attributes of the sexes, so that the weaker may turn the chase upon the stronger, and

the pigeon become the pursuer of the hawk. The frank and exacting manners of Charlotte Rusport, and his other ladies (which, should they ever become fashionable, would be no slight inconvenience to our modish gentlemen) were carried to their height in the novel of *Henry*, in which the virtues of continence and chastity, which, ever since the days of Heliodorus, the first novelist on record, have been esteemed the indispensable and inalienable property of the heroine of the tale, were, *vi et armis*, transferred to the hero, leaving the unfortunate damsel to whom they rightfully belonged as bare of both as the birch-tree of leaves upon Christmas eve. This singular taste seemed so deeply ingrafted in Mr. Cumberland's system of writing, that when we understood that he had selected a scriptural subject for his last poem, we never doubted for an instant that he had given the preference to the history of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. And though then mistaken, we find the present novel exhibiting symptoms too peculiar to be overlooked in a general view of Mr. Cumberland's literary character. The second predilection to which we alluded, is the peculiar pleasure which this author finds in a duel with all its previous pomp and circumstance of gentlemanlike defiance, retort, and reproof valiant. A single combat, either commenced or completed, makes a part of almost all his narratives, and Dr. Caranza himself cannot be estimated a more perfect judge of points of honour concerning the distance, the arms, and all the punctilio of the duello. Of this there is enough, and to spare, in the following pages.

The story of *John de Lancaster* is neither long nor complicated. The principal character and real hero of the novel is Robert de Lancaster, an ancient Welsh Esquire, whose character is derived from that of a Mr. Shandy, senior, checkered with the hundred attributes of Cornelius Scriblerus, father of the renowned Martinus. He is a great reader of all such learned works as convey neither instruction nor information, and in perusing the ancient historians, whether of the classical or Gothic period, "holds each stranger tale devoutly true." This humour is pushed into the regions of utter and raving extravagance, especially as, saving in points of learning or science, we are required to believe that the old gentleman is not only of a sane mind, but endowed with uncommon good sense and talents, as well

as with an admirable temper and most benevolent disposition, the cast whereof we think he derived from a certain Squire Alworthy, of Alworthy Hall in Somersetshire, who may not be utterly unknown to some of our readers. The credulity of this worthy person being seconded by no small quantity of family pride, he places implicit reliance on a pedigree which deduces his family in a direct line, not from Brutus or Howel Dha, but from Samothas, son of Japheth, the third son of Noah; and believes that his ancestor acquired the family estate sixty-six years after the taking of Troy, and eleven hundred thirty and two years before the Christian era. He credits another tradition, which affirms that his ancestor taught King Bladud to fly; and another concerning an island in Ireland where the natives are immortal. As if this burden were not sufficient for his faith, he believes with Mr. Shandy in the effect of Christian names upon their owners, with Cornelius Scriblerus in the influence of the harp in appeasing insurrections, and contends that "soft airs well executed on the flute, were found to be a never-failing cure for the sciatica or hip-gout."—Vol. i, p. 289.

When the tale opens, Robert de Lancaster is residing quietly in his hereditary castle with his daughter Cecilia, an amiable old maid, his son Philip, a sort of cousin-german to the author's excellent Ned Drowsy, and his daughter-in-law, wife of the said Philip, who is then just about to add an heir to Kray Castle, and a link to the lineage of Samothes ap Japheth ap Noah. This desirable event is hastened in a very undesirable manner by an awkward Welsh baronet, named Sir Owen ap Owen, who, in a fit of tumultuous gallantry, overturns the tea equipage into the lap of Mrs. De Lancaster. While she receives the necessary attendance in her premature accouchement, the group below are left in circumstances which again fatally remind us of the *Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*. The elder De Lancaster on this occasion harangues his friend Colonel Wilson, a maimed officer on half-pay, the Uncle Toby of the tale, whose blunt, soldier-like simplicity is meant to contrast the absurd ingenuity of his patron.

"So many things are assumed without being examined, and so many disbelieved without being disproved, that I am not hasty to assent or dissent in compliment to the multitude; and on this account perhaps I am considered as a man affecting singularity;

I hope I am not to be found guilty of that idle affectation, only because I would not be a dealer in opinions, which I have not weighed before I deliver them out. Above all things I would not traffic in conjectures, but carefully avoid imposing upon others or myself by confident anticipation, when nothing can be affirmed with certainty in this mortal state of chance and change, that is not grounded on conviction; for instance, in the case of the lady above stairs, whose situation keeps our hopes and fears upon the balance, our presumption is, that Mrs. De Lancaster shall be delivered of a child, either male or female, and in all respects like other children—

"'I confess,' said Wilson, 'that is my presumption, and I should be most outrageously astonished, should it happen otherwise.'

"'I don't think it likely,' murmured Philip.

"'No, no, no,' replied De Lancaster; 'but we need not be reminded how many preternatural and prodigious births have occurred and been recorded in the annals of mankind. Whether the natives of the town of Stroud near Rochester are to this day under the ban of Thomas à Becket, I am not informed; but when, in contempt of that holy person, they wantonly cut off the tail of his mule as he rode through their street, you have it from authority that every child thenceforward born to an inhabitant of Stroud was punished by the appendage of an incommodious and enormous tail, exactly corresponding with that which had been amputated from the archbishop's mule.'

"Here a whistle from the colonel [to the tune of Lilibulero, we presume] struck the auditory nerves of Philip, who, gently laying his hand upon his stump, gravely reminded him that Becket was a saint—

"De Lancaster proceeded—'What then shall we say of the famous Martin Luther, who being ordained to act so conspicuous a part in opposition to the papal power, came into the world fully equipped for controversy; his mother being delivered of her infant (wonderful to relate) habited in all points as a theologian, and (which I conceive must have sensibly incommoded her) wearing a square cap on his head, according to academic costume. This, Colonel Wilson, may perhaps appear to you, as no doubt it did to the midwife, and all present at his birth, as a very extraordinary and preternatural circumstance.'

"'It does not indeed appear so,' said the colonel. 'I know you don't invent the fable; I should like to know your authority for it.'

"'My authority,' replied De Lancaster, 'in this case, is the same as in that of Becket's mule; Martinus Delrius is my authority for both; and when we find this gravely set forth by a writer of such high dignity and credit, himself a doctor of theology, and public professor of the Holy Scriptures in the University of Salamanca, who is bold enough to question it?'

"'I am not bold enough to believe it,' said Wilson."—Pp. 25–29.

During this learned discussion, which we produce as a specimen of the dialogue and manners, Mrs. Philip de Lan-

caster is disincumbered of a boy, who, after such absurd ceremony as suited an old humourist, that half expected his grandson's arrival with a tail at one extremity, and a doctor's cap at the other, is christened by the name of John de Lancaster. We are next treated with a long account of a visit actually achieved by the ancient De Lancaster to another old gentleman called Ap Morgan, the father of Mrs. Philip de Lancaster, and maternal grandfather to the infantine hero. Ap Morgan, it seems, had discovered (something of the latest) that when through paternal influence his daughter was induced to bestow her hand upon the descendant of King Samothes, she had sacrificed to filial duty a tender predilection in favour of a certain gallant young officer, by name Captain Jones. This circumstance he communicates to old De Lancaster, acquainting him at the same time, in very civil terms, that he was grieved to death at having conferred his daughter on so stupid a fellow as his son Philip, when she had made a so much better choice for herself. To repay this confidence, De Lancaster proves to Morgan, without the assistance of Delrius, that he was not responsible for the consequences of her obstinate silence, that their son and daughter were admirably matched, the lady being a religious hypochondriac, and the gentleman a mere cypher; and that their parental tenderness ought to overlook both as a blank in their lineage, fixing their only hopes upon the grandson, whom, under Providence, they had been the means of producing to the De Lancasters and Ap Morgans.—All which is admitted by old Morgan as a "cure of the mournfuls;" his taste in consolation being at least as peculiar as that of his friend in history and philosophy.—Meanwhile, Penruth Abbey, the seat of Sir Owen Ap Owen, receives two important inmates. These are a Spanish lady, or rather a Spanish Jewess, widow to a brother of the baronet who had settled in Spain, and her son, the heir of the title and estate.

The descendants of Israel were heretofore favourites with Mr. Cumberland. The characters of Abraham Abrahams in the *Observer*, of Sheva in the *Jew*, even of Nicolas Pedrosa in the lively tale which bears his name, are honourable and able testimonies of his efforts to stem popular prejudice in favour of a people, degraded because they are oppressed, and ridiculed because they are degraded. Apparently, however, he hath repented him of his inclination towards the

Jews, for not only do this same Mrs. Ap Owen and her son exhibit characters the most base, malicious, and detestable, but their descent from the stock of Abraham is thrown at their heads by all who speak of them, and is obviously held out as one source at least of their enormities. There is a singular passage in Mr. Cumberland's Memoirs, from which it would seem that the guilt of negligence, at least, if not of ingratitude, worse than witchcraft, has, in his opinion, attached to the synagogue.* Perhaps this may be one cause why he now spits upon their Jewish gaberdine.

In tracing the crimes of the Ap Owens, Mr. Cumberland follows the maxim, "Nemo repente turpissimus." The mother sets out by entrapping the leisure, if not the heart, of Mr. Philip de Lancaster, whose hypochondriac spouse is now expected to bid the world good night, under the influence of a slow decline. The character of David Ap Owen also opens gradually on the reader. He first pinches the tail of a lap-dog: secondly, he gallops past young John de Lancaster, in hunting, and maliciously bespatters him with mud and gravel, to the great damage of his clothes, and danger of his precious eyesight: thirdly, this "Jew-born miscreant," as De Lancaster terms him, insults the youthful heir of Kray Castle at a festive meeting of the family harpers. But a darker scene is soon to open,—Sir Owen Ap Owen, worried out of his life by his sister-in-law and nephew, dies about the period when John de Lancaster, from an amiable and promising boy, has become a gallant youth. The baronet had bequeathed to Cecilia de Lancaster a

* "The public prints gave the Jews credit for their sensibility in acknowledging my well-intended services; my friends gave me joy of honorary presents, and some even accused me of ingratitude for not making public my thanks for their munificence. I will speak plainly on this point; I do most heartily wish they had flattered me with some token, however small, of which I might have said, *this is a tribute to my philanthropy*, and delivered it down to my children, as my beloved father did to me his badge of favour from the citizens of Dublin: but not a word from the lips, not a line did I ever receive from the pen of any Jew, though I have found myself in company with many of their nation; and in this perhaps the gentlemen are quite right, whilst I had formed expectations, that were quite wrong; for if I have said for them only what they deserve, why should I be thanked for it? But if I have said more, much more than they deserve, can they do a wiser thing than hold their tongues?"

valuable diamond ring,—to young John, a favourite hunter. The ring is stolen by Mrs. Ap Owen, the horse hamstrung by her son, now Sir David. Their villany and cruelty are detected. The gentlemen of the country, attached to the interest of the house of Owen, and members of a hunt over which the heir of that family presided, proceed to hold, what, for want of a better word, we shall call a *grand palaver*, upon this important occasion; and, after a solemn investigation of these delinquencies, transfer, in all form, their friendship and allegiance to the rival house of de Lancaster. Sir David and his mother are hooted from Wales, and obliged to retreat to Portugal. This dark picture is mingled with softer shades; John de Lancaster falls in love with a beautiful girl, the daughter of that same Captain Jones to whom his mother had been early attached. Mrs. Philip de Lancaster had placed all her earthly hopes on planning a match between her son and the daughter of her lover. Yet this seemed an untoward project, for at the very first interview, John, as he is usually and concisely termed, being so much struck with the young lady's beauty as to substitute an ardent embrace for the more formal salutation of a bow, alarms the discreet *gouvernante*, who, ignorant of Mrs. de Lancaster's views, secludes the young lady from so unceremonious a visitor. This occasions some slight misunderstandings and embarrassments, which we have not time to trace or disentangle, as we hasten to the conclusion of the novel.

While Mrs. Philip de Lancaster was quietly dying at Kray Castle, her husband was suddenly seized with the fancy of setting out to take lodgings for her at Montpellier. Most people would have thought his company on the road more necessary to the invalid than his exertions as an *avant courier*. But this worthy *poco curante* was exactly in the situation of the Jolly Miller, who cared for nobody and nobody for him, so he was permitted to execute his plan of travelling without remonstrance or interference. His evil destiny guided him to Lisbon, where he received news of his lady's decease, and immediately after fell into the society, and of course into the toils, of the Ap Owens. These Jewish —Spanish—Welsh reprobates, by the assistance of a Portuguese bravo with long whiskers, compelled poor Philip to sign a bond, obliging himself, under a high penalty, to marry

Mrs. Ap Owen before the expiration of three months. No sooner had he submitted to this degrading engagement, than he became anxious to evade the completion, and wrote a most dismal penitentiary letter to his son John, imploring him to hasten to Lisbon and rescue him from the matrimonial shackles about to be forcibly imposed on him. This epistle was delivered at Kray Castle by a Mr. Devereux, who had sailed for England to learn something of the character of Sir David Ap Owen, ere he countenanced his addresses to his sister. He is soon convinced of the infamy of the baronet, and returns to Portugal with young Lancaster, who loses not a moment in flying to his father's assistance. He came, however, too late. Philip was doomed to lose his life through the only exertion of courage which its course exhibited. Sir David had urged the fulfilment of the bond, and in a rencontre which followed, basely availed himself of the assistance of his bravo, to murder his intended father-in-law. When John arrived, he found his father mortally wounded, and his enemy in the hands of justice. The former dies—the latter commits suicide, and Mrs. Ap Owen throws herself into a convent or a synagogue, we forget which. The fair hand of Miss Devereux is conferred upon the son of Colonel Wilson, a gallant young officer, who had accompanied John on his Portuguese crusade. Her hand indeed he had proudly refused to solicit, and almost to accept; for we are told that her father's coffers overflowed with the gold of Brazil, and that his daughter was a rock of diamonds, while her lover was in all respects a soldier of fortune. But this difficulty is overcome, as is usual in Mr. Cumberland's plots, by the express solicitations of the fair lady. The return of the whole party to England is followed by the nuptials of Amelia and John de Lancaster. His grandfather, for their guidance, was pleased to compose a code of rules for domestic happiness in the married state, which are thus described:

"They consisted chiefly of truisms, which he was at the pains of proving; and of errors so obvious, that examination could not make them clearer. He pointed out so many ways, by which man and wife must render each other miserable, that he seemed to have forgot that the purport of his rules was to make them happy. So little was this learned work adapted to the object held out in the title, that, if it had been pasted up for general use on the door

of a church, it may be doubted if any, who had read it, would have entered there to be married."

In *John de Lancaster*, although we cannot attach the importance to it which is claimed by the author, we find a good deal to praise. The language is uniformly elegant and well-turned, some of the repartees are neatly introduced, and the occasional observations of the author are in general pointed and sensible. Some scenes of pathetic interest arise from the death of a young woman, robbed of her virtue by the nefarious Sir David Owen. A Welsh harper and poet is repeatedly introduced, and many of his lyrical effusions are not inferior to those of Mr. Dibdin. The following verses might be sung to advantage at a charity dinner when the subscription books were opened, provided a few bumper toasts had previously circulated.

"Let thy cash buy the blessing and pray'r of the poor,
And let them intercede when death comes to thy door,
They perhaps may appease that importunate power,
When thy coffers can't buy the reprieve of an hour.

"Foolish man, don't you know every grain of your gold
May give food to the hungry and warmth to the cold,
A purchase in this world shall soon pass away,
But a treasure in Heaven will never decay."—&c. &c.

Of the skill exhibited in conducting the incidents, we cannot speak with much applause. The black and flagitious villany of Owen is without any adequate motive, and is, therefore, inartificial and revolting. Besides, John and he squabble and affront and threaten each other through the whole book, without coming to any personal issue. They are constantly levelling their pistols, and alarming our nerves with the apprehension that they will go off at half-cock. We have, however, in this, as in all Mr. Cumberland's novels, the pleasing feeling that virtue goes on from triumph to triumph, and that vice is baffled in its schemes, even by their own baseness and atrocity. There is, we think, no attempt at peculiarity of character, unless in the outline of the grandfather, whose extravagance is neither original nor consistent. Mr. Cumberland assures us that he has turned over many volumes to supply Robert de Lancaster with the absurd hobby-horsical erudition diffused through his conversation. No one will dispute Mr. Cumberland's learning, but the allusions to the classics might have been taken from

any ordinary work on antiquities; and to black letter lore, he makes no pretence, almost all his hero's references being to imaginary authors, and the quotations devised for the nonce by Mr. Cumberland himself. This is the more unpardonable, as a display of ancient Welsh manners, and appropriate allusions to the history, legends and traditions of Gyneth, Prestatyn, and Deheubarth, would have given his hero's character the air, if not the substance, of originality. The insertion of vague gibberish is a wretched substitute. Had Ritson been alive he might have rued his rash intrusion on this sacred ground. The invention (even in jest) of suppositious authorities and quotations, would certainly have brought down castigation under some quaint and newly furbished title, which had already served to introduce the satire of Nash, Harvey, or Martin Marprelate, such as "*Pap with a hatchet, or a Fig for my Grannum;*" or, "*A very merrie and pithie Comedie, intituled, The longer thou livest the more Fool thou art.*"

Mr. Cumberland has made an affecting apology for the imperfections of his novel, by calling upon us to consider his long services and advanced age. It is perhaps a harsh answer, that every work must be judged of by its internal merit, whether composed like that of Lipsius, upon the day in which he was born, or, like the last tragedy of Sophocles, upon the very verge of human existence. We should, therefore, have listened more favourably to this personal plea, had we not been provoked by a strain of querulous discontent, neither worthy of the author's years, of his philosophy, nor of his real goodness of heart. We have, for example, the following doleful lamentation over the praise and the pudding, which, he alleges, have been gobbled up by his contemporaries.

"If, in the course of my literary labours, I had been less studious to adhere to nature and simplicity, I am perfectly convinced I should have stood higher in estimation with the purchasers of copyrights, and probably been read and patronized by my contemporaries in the proportion of ten to one. To acquire a popularity of name, which might set the speculating publishers upon out-bidding one another for an embryo work (perhaps in meditation only) seems to be as proud and enviable a pre-eminence as human genius can arrive at: but if that pre-eminence has been acquired by a fashion of writing, that luckily falls in with the prevailing taste for the romantic and unnatural, that writer, whoever he may be, has only made his advantage of the present hour,

and forfeited his claim upon the time to come: having paid this tribute to popularity, he certainly may enjoy the profits of deception, and take his chance for being marked out by posterity (whenever a true taste for nature shall revive) as the misleader and impostor of the age he lived in.

"The circulation of a work is propagated by the cry of the many; its perpetuity is established by the fiat of the few. If we have no concern for our good name after we have left this world, how do we greatly differ from the robber and the assassin?—But this is nothing but an old man's prattle. Nobody regards it—We will return to our history."—Vol. ii, p. 176.

By our troth, Mr. Cumberland, these be very bitter words. We are no defenders of ghost-seeing and diablerie.—That mode of exciting interest ought to be despised as too obvious and too much in vulgar use; but, when the appeal is made to nature, we must recollect that there are incredibilities in the moral, as well as physical, world. Whole nations have believed in demons and witches; but who can believe that such a caricature as Robert de Lancaster ever existed out of the precincts of Bedlam?—There is no one that has not, at some period of his life, felt interested in a ghost-story; but it is impossible to sympathize with a character who pins his faith to figments as gross as if in his respect for green cheese he had conceived the moon to be composed of that savoury edible. Mr. Cumberland's assumed contempt of public applause we cannot but consider as an unworthy affectation. In fact, few men have shown more eagerness to engross the public favour, of which he now grudges his contemporaries their slight and transitory share. His papers have come flying abroad on the wings of the hawkers. He has written comedies at which we have cried, and tragedies at which we have laughed: he has composed indecent novels and religious epics. He has pandered to the public lust for personal anecdote, by writing his own life, and the private history of his acquaintances.

> "At length he took his muse and dipt her
> Full in the middle of the Scripture:
> What wonders there the man grown old did,
> Sternhold himself he out-Sternholded."

Popularity we own to be a frail nymph, and far too free of her favours; but we cannot see her lashed by an author, who has strained every nerve to gain a share of them, without recollecting the exclamation of Lear:—

"Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand!
Why dost thou lash that whore?—Strip thine own back;
Thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind
For which thou whipp'st her."

Neither can we offer Mr. Cumberland much consolation on the other topic of his complaint. He seems to think of this predilection of the public as Trinculo did of losing his bottle in the pool, and grows doubly indignant at the pipe and tabor of the deluding Demonologist—"There is not only dishonour in it, but an infinite loss—yet this is your innocent goblin!" The gentlemen of Paternoster-row we are afraid, notwithstanding Mr. Cumberland's diatribe, will continue obstinately to prefer discounting drafts on the present generation, payable at sight, to long-dated bills on posterity, which cannot be accepted till both the drawer and holder have become immortal in every sense of the word.

Upon the whole, we rejoice that an old and valued friend has, at the advanced age of seventy-six, strength and spirits to amuse himself and the public with his compositions; and we think it will conduce greatly to both, if he will cease to fret himself because of the success of ballad-singers, ghost-seers, and the young Roscius. If they flourish at present, let him console himself with the transitory quality of their prosperity. We dare not soothe him too much by assenting to the counter-part of his prophecy: for although the hopes of future glory have been the consolation of every bard under immediate neglect, yet experience compels us to confess that they are usually fallacious. Contemporary applause does not once, perhaps, in an hundred times, ensure that of posterity; but few names are handed down to immortality, which have not been distinguished in their own generation; and least of all do we anticipate any splendid accession to the posthumous fame of an author, whose talents do not, in the present day, rank him above a dignified and respectable mediocrity.

MATURIN'S FATAL REVENGE.*

[Quarterly Review, 1810.]

J'apprends *d'être vif*. Such was the noted answer of a German baron who had alarmed a whole Parisian hotel by leaping over joint-stools in his solitary apartment. This mode of qualifying himself for the lively conversation of the French was probably attended with some fatigue to the worthy *Frei-herr's* person, and perhaps some damage to his shins; with which we the more readily sympathize, as, in compliance with the hint of several well-meaning friends, we are just taking the pen after some desperate efforts *pour apprendre à être vif*. It was whispered to us, in no unfriendly voice, that we were respectable classical scholars, divines at least as serious as was necessary, tolerable politicians, considering the old-fashioned nature of our principles, and as good philosophers as could be expected of persons obviously trammelled by belief in the tenets which, in compliance with ancient custom, are still delivered once in seven days to those who choose to hear them. It seemed further to be allowed, that we were indifferent good hands at a sarcasm, and displayed some taste for poetry; but still we were not lively—that is, we had none of those light and airy articles which a young lady might read while her hair was papering. To sum up all in one dismal syllable, it was insinuated that we were *dull*. To prove the futility of the charge, we resolved to extend the sphere of our inquiries; and to review not only the grave and weighty, but the flitting and evanescent productions of the times; for the purpose of giving full scope to our ingenuity, and evincing the vivacity of our talents, so wantonly called in question. The want of

* *Fatal Revenge; or, the Family of Montorio: a Romance.* By Dennis Jasper Murphy.† 3 vols. 8vo. London. 1807.

† [Afterwards avowed of the Rev. C. R. Maturin.]

proper subjects for the exercise of our powers was the first dilemma. We had no friendly correspondent at the court of Paris who, with a sentimental flourish on the peace which ought to subsist in the republic of letters, though war raged between the respective countries of the sages, might forward, through some kind neutral, the last new novel or the latest philosophical discovery of the Institute, and only expect us, in requital, to give the wit and learning and science of the Great Nation its reasonable and just precedence over those of our own country. What then was to be done? After some consideration, we sent to our publisher, for an assortment of the newest and most fashionable novels, hoping to find among the frivolous articles of domestic manufacture something to supply the want of foreign importation. It is from a laborious inspection into the contents of this packet or rather hamper, that we are now risen with the painful conviction that spirits and patience may be as completely exhausted in perusing trifles as in following algebraical calculations. Before proceeding, however, to the novel selected almost at random for the subject of a few remarks, we cannot but express our surprise at the present degradation of this class of compositions.

The elegant and fascinating productions which honoured the name of novel, those which Richardson, Mackenzie, and Burney, gave to the public; of which it was the object to exalt virtue and degrade vice, to which no fault could be objected unless that they unfitted here and there a romantic mind for the common intercourse of life, while they refined perhaps a thousand whose faculties could better bear the fair ideal which they presented—these have entirely vanished from the shelves of the circulating library. It may indeed be fairly alleged in defence of those who decline attempting this higher and more refined species of composition, that the soil was in some degree exhausted by over-cropping—that the multitude of base and tawdry imitations obscured the merit of the few which are tolerable, as the overwhelming blaze of blue, red, green and yellow, at the exhibition, vitiates our taste for the few good paintings which show their modest hues upon its walls. The public was indeed weary of the protracted embarrassments of lords and ladies who spoke such language as was never spoken, and still more so of the sea-saw correspondence between the senti-

mental Lady Lucretia and the witty Miss Caroline, who battledored it in the pathetic and the lively, Like Morton and Reynolds on the stage. But let us be just to dead and to living merit. In some of the novels of the late Charlotte Smith, we found no ordinary portion of that fascinating power which leads us through every various scene of happiness or distress at the will of the author; which places the passions of the wise and grave for a time under the command of ideal personages; and perhaps has more attraction for the public at large than any other species of literary composition, the drama not excepted. Nor do we owe less to Miss Edgeworth, whose true and vivid pictures of modern life contain the only sketches reminding us of human beings, whom, secluded as we are, we have actually seen and conversed with in various parts of this great metropolis.

When we had removed from the surface of our hamper a few thin volumes of simple and insipid sentiment; taken a moment's breath; and exclaimed "O Athenians, how hard we labour for your applause!" we lighted upon a class of books which excited sterner sensations. There existed formerly a species of novel of a tragi-comic nature, which, far from pretending to the extreme sentiment and delicacy of the works last mentioned, admitted, like the elder English comedy, a considerable dash of coarse and even indelicate humour. Such were the compositions of Fielding; and such of Smollet, the literary Hogarth, whose figures, though they seldom attain grace or elegance, were marked with indelible truth and peculiarity of character. Instead of this kind of comic satire, in which, to borrow a few words of Old Withers, abuses, when whipped, were perhaps stripped a litle too bare, we have now the lowest denizens of Grub street narrating, under the flimsy veil of false names, and through the medium of a fictitious tale, all that malevolence can invent and stupidity propagate concerning private misfortunes and personal characters. We have our Winters in London, Bath, and Brighton, of which it is the dirty object to drag forth the secret history of the day, and to give to scandal a court of written record. The talent which most of these things indicate is that of the lowest newspaper composition, and the acquaintance with the fashionable world precisely what might be gleaned from the footman or porter; while the portraits of Bow street officers, swindlers,

and bailiffs, are possibly drawn from a more intimate acquaintance. The shortness of our cruise has not yet permitted us to fall in with any of these picaroons; but let them beware, as Lieutenant Bowling says, how they come athwart our hawser; "we shall mind running them down no more than so many porpoises."

"Plunging from depth to deph a vast profound," we at length imagined ourselves arrived at the Limbus Patrum in good earnest. The imitators of Mrs. Radcliffe and Mr. Lewis were before us; personages who, to all the faults and extravagances of their originals, added that of dulness, with which they can seldom be charged. We strolled through a variety of castles, each of which was regularly called Il Castello; met with as many captains of condottieri; heard various ejaculations of Santa Maria and Diabolo; read by a decaying lamp, and in a tapestried chamber, dozens of legends as stupid as the main history; examined such suites of deserted apartments as might fit up a reasonable barrack; and saw as many glimmering lights as would make a respectable illumination—Amid these flat imitations of the *Castle of Udolpho*, we lighted unexpectedly upon the work which is the subject of the present article, and, in defiance of the very bad taste in which it is composed, we found ourselves insensibly involved in the perusal, and at times impressed with no common degree of respect for the powers of the author. We have at no time more earnestly desired to extend our voice to a bewildered traveller, than towards this young man, whose taste is so inferior to his powers of imagination and expression, that we never saw a more remarkable instance of genius degraded by the labour in which it is employed. It is the resentment and regret which we experience at witnessing the abuse of these qualities, as well as the wish to hazard a few remarks upon the romantic novel in general, which has induced us (though we are obliged to go back a little) to offer our criticism on the *Fatal Revenge, or the Family of Montorio.*

It is scarcely possible to abridge the narrative, nor would the attempt be edifying or entertaining. A short abstract of the story is all for which we can afford room. It is introduced in the following striking manner.

"At the siege of Barcelona by the French, in the year 1697, two young officers entered into the service at its most hot and

critical period. Their appearance excited some surprise and perplexity. Their melancholy was Spanish, their accent Italian, their names and habits French.

"They distinguished themselves in the service by a kind of careless and desperate courage, that appeared equally insensible of praise or of danger. They forced themselves into all the *coups de main*, the wild and perilous sallies that abound in a spirited siege, and mark it with a greater variety and vivacity of character than a regular campaign. *Here* they were in their element. But among their brother officers, so cold, so distant, so repulsive, that even *they* who loved their courage, or were interested in their melancholy, stood aloof in awkward and hesitating sympathy. Still, though they would not accept the offices of the benevolence their appearance inspired, they were involuntarily always conciliated. Their figures and motions were so eminently noble and striking, their affection for each other so conspicuous, and their youthful melancholy so deep and hopeless, that every one inquired and sought intelligence of them from an impulse stronger than curiosity. Nothing could be learnt; nothing was known, or even conjectured of them.

"During the siege, an Italian officer, of middle age, arrived to assume the command of a post of distinction. His first meeting with these young men was remarkable. They stood speechless and staring at each other for some time. In the mixture of emotions that passed over their countenances, no one predominant or decisive could be traced by the many and anxious witnesses that surrounded them.

"As soon as they separated, the Italian officer was persecuted with inquiries about the strangers. He answered none of them; yet he admitted that he knew circumstances sufficiently extraordinary relating to the young men, who, he said, were natives of Italy.

"A few days after, Barcelona was taken by the French forces. The assault was terrible; the young officers were in the very rage of the fight; they coveted and courted danger; they stood amid showers of grape and ball; they rushed into the heart of crater and explosions; they literally 'wrought in the fire.' The effects of their dreadful courage were foreseen by all; and cries of recall and expostulation sounded around them on every side, in vain.

"On the French taking possession of the town, there was a general demand for the *brothers*. With difficulty the bodies were discovered, and brought with melancholy pomp into the commander's presence. The Italian officer was there; every eye was turned to him."—*Introd.* pp. ix-xiii.

The history of these mysterious brothers is told by the officer who had recognised them, and runs briefly thus: Orazio, Count of Montorio—for we begin our story with the explanation, which in the original concludes it—possessed of wealth, honours, and ancestry, is married to a beautiful woman, whom he loves doatingly, but of whose

affections he is not possessed. A villanous brother instils into his mind jealousy of a cavalier to whom the countess had been formerly attached. Orazio causes the supposed paramour to be murdered in the presence of the lady, who also dies: he then flies from his country with feelings of desperation thus forcibly described:—

"My reason was not suspended, it was totally *changed*. I had become a kind of intellectual savage; a being that, with the malignity and depravation of inferior natures, still retains the reason of a man, and retains it only for his curse. Oh! that midnight darkness of the soul, in which it seeks for something whose loss has carried away every sense but one of utter and desolate privation; in which it traverses leagues in motion and worlds in thought, without consciousness of relief, yet with a dread of pausing. I had nothing to seek, nothing to recover; the whole world could not restore me an atom, could not show me again a glimpse of what I had been or lost; yet I rushed on as if the next step would reach shelter and peace."—Vol. iii, p. 380.

In this maniac state he reaches an uninhabited islet in the Grecian archipelago, where, from a conversation accidently overheard between two wretched assassins sent by his brother to murder him, the wretched Orazio learns the innocence of his victims, and the full extent of his misery. He contrives to murder his murderers, and the effect of the subsequent discovery upon his feelings is described in a strain of language, which we were alternately tempted to admire as sublime and to reprobate as bombastic.

Orazio determines on revenge, and his plan is diabolically horrid. He resolves to accomplish the murder of his treacherous brother, who, in consequence of his supposed death, had now assumed the honours of the family; and he further determined that this act of vengeance should be perpetrated by the hands of that very brother's own sons, two amiable youths, who had no cloud upon their character, excepting an attachment to mysterious studies, and a strong propensity to superstition.

We do not mean to trace this agent of vengeance through the various devices and stratagems by which he involved in his toils his unsuspecting nephews, assumed in their apprehension the character of an infernal agent, and decoyed them first to meditate upon, and at length actually to perpetrate, the parricide which was the crown and summit of his wishes. The doctrine of fatalism, on which he principally relied for reconciling his victims to his purpose, is in

various passages detailed with much gloomy and terrific eloquence. The rest of his machinery is composed of banditti, caverns, dungeons, inquisitors, trap-doors, ruins, secret passages, soothsayers, and all the usual accoutrements from the property-room of Mrs. Radcliffe. The horror of the piece is completed by the murderer discovering that the youths whom he has taken such pains to involve in parricide are not the sons of his brother, but his own offspring by his unfortunate wife. We do not dwell upon any of these particulars, because the observations which we have to hazard upon this neglected novel apply to a numerous class of the same kind, and because the incidents are such as are to be found in most of them.

In the first place, then, we disapprove of the mode introduced by Mrs. Radcliffe, and followed by Mr. Murphy and her other imitators, by winding up their story with a solution by which all the incidents, appearing to partake of the mystic and marvellous, are resolved by very simple and natural causes. This seems, to us, to savour of the precaution of Snug the Joiner; or, rather, it is as if the mechanist, when the pantomime was over, should turn his scenes "the seamy side without," and expose the mechanical aids by which the delusions were accomplished. In one respect, indeed, it is worse mismanagement; because the understanding spectator might be in some degree gratified by the view of engines which, however rude, were well adapted to produce the effects which he had witnessed. But the machinery of the *Castle of Montorio*, when exhibited, is wholly inadequate to the gigantic operations ascribed to it. There is a total and absolute disproportion between the cause and effect, which must disgust every reader much more than if he were left under the delusion of ascribing the whole to supernatural agency. The latter resource has indeed many disadvantages: some of which we shall briefly notice. But it is an admitted expedient; appeals to the belief of all ages but our own; and still produces, when well managed, some effect even upon those who are most disposed to contemn its influence. We can therefore allow of supernatural agency to a certain extent and for an appropriate purpose, but we never can consent that the effect of such agency shall be finally attributable to natural causes totally inadequate to its production. We can believe, for example, in Macbeth's witches, and tremble

at their spells; but had we been informed, in the conclusion of the piece, that they were only three of his wife's chambermaids disguised for the purpose of imposing on the Thane's credulity, it would have added little to the credibility of the story, and entirely deprived it of the interest. In like manner we fling back upon the Radcliffe school their flat and ridiculous explanations, and plainly tell them that they must either confine themselves to ordinary and natural events, or find adequate causes for those horrors and mysteries in which they love to involve us. Yet another word on this subject. We know not if a novel writer of the present day expects or desires his labours to be perused oftener than once; but as there may be here and there a maiden aunt in a family, for whose advantage it must be again read over by the young lady who has already devoured it in secret, we advise them to consider how much they suffer from their adherence to this unfortunate system. We will instance the incident of the black veil in the castle of Udolpho. Attention is excited, and afterwards recalled, by a hundred indirect artifices, to the dreadful and unexplained mystery which the heroine had seen beneath it; and which, after all, proves to be nothing more nor less than a waxen doll. This trick may indeed for once answer the writer's purpose; and has, we suppose, cost many an extra walk to the circulating library, and many a curse upon the malicious concurrent who always has the fourth volume in hand. But it is as impossible to reperuse the book without feeling the contempt awakened by so pitiful a contrivance as it is for a child to regain its original respect for King Solomon after he has seen the monarch disrobed of all his glory, and deposited in the same box with Punch and his wife. And, in fact, we feel inclined to abuse the author in such a case as the watch do Harlequin, when they find out his trick of frightening by mimicking the report of a pistol.

> "Faquin, maraud, pendard, impudent, téméraire,
> Vous osez nous faire peur!"

In the second place, we are of opinion that the terrors of this class of novel writers are too accumulated and unremitting. The influence of fear—and here we extend our observations as well to those romances which actually ground it upon supernatural prodigy as to those which attempt a subsequent explanation—is indeed a faithful and legitimate

key to unlock every source of fancy and of feeling. Mr. Murphy's introduction is expressed with the spirit and animation which, though often misdirected, pervade his whole work.

"I question whether there be a source of emotion in the whole mental frame so powerful or universal as *the fear arising from objects of invisible terror*. Perhaps there is no other that has been, at some period or other of life, the predominant and indelible sensation of every mind, of every class, and under every circumstance. Love, supposed to be the most general of passions, has certainly been felt in its purity by very few, and by some not at all, even in its most indefinite and simple state.

"The same might be said, *à fortiori*, of other passions. But who is there that has never feared? Who is there that has not involuntarily remembered the gossip's tale in solitude or in darkness? Who is there that has not sometimes shivered under an influence he would scarce acknowledge to himself? I might trace this passion to a high and obvious source.

"It is enough for my purpose to assert its existence and prevalency, which will scarcely be disputed by those who remember it. It is absurd to depreciate this passion, and deride its influence. It is *not* the weak and trivial impulse of the nursery, to be forgotten and scorned by manhood. It is the aspiration of a spirit; 'it is the passion of immortals,' that dread and desire of their final habitations."—*Pref.* pp. 4 & 5.

We grant there is much truth in this proposition taken generally. But the finest and deepest feelings are those which are most easily exhausted. The chord which vibrates and sounds at a touch, remains in silent tension under continued pressure. Besides, terror, as Bob Acres says of its counterpart, courage, will come and go; and few people can afford timidity enough for the writer's purpose who is determined on "horrifying" them through three thick volumes. The vivacity of the emotion also depends greatly upon surprise, and surprise cannot be repeatedly excited during the perusal of the same work. It is said respecting the cruel punishment of breaking alive upon the wheel, the sufferer's nerves are so much jarred by the first blow, that he feels comparatively little pain from those which follow. There is something of this in moral feeling; nor do we see a better remedy for it than to recommend the cessation of these experiments upon the public, until their sensibility shall have recovered its original tone. The taste for the marvellous has been indeed compared to the habit of drinking ardent liquors. But it unfortunately differs in having its limits: he upon whom one dram does not produce the effect, can attain

the desired degree of inebriation by doubling the dose. But when we have ceased to start at one ghost, we are callous to the exhibition of a whole Pandemonium. In short, the sensation is generally as transient as it is powerful, and commonly depends upon some slight circumstances which cannot be repeated.

> "The time has been, our senses would have cool'd
> To hear a night-shriek; and our fell of hair
> Would at a dismal treatise rouse, and stir
> As life were in't. We have supped full with horrors;
> And direness, now familiar to our thoughts,
> Cannot once start us." [*Macbeth*, *act v*, *sc.* 5.]

These appear to us the greatest disadvantages under which any author must at present struggle, who chooses supernatural terror for his engine of moving the passions. We dare not call them insurmountable, for how shall we dare to limit the efforts of genius, or shut against its possessor any avenue to the human heart or its passions? Mr. Murphy himself, for aught we know, may be destined to show us the prudence of this qualification. He possesses a strong and vigorous fancy, with great command of language. He has indeed regulated his incidents upon those of others, and therefore added to the imperfections which we have pointed out, the want of originality. But his feeling and conception of character are his own, and from these we judge of his powers. In truth, we rose from his strange chaotic novel romance as from a confused and feverish dream, unrefreshed and unamused, yet strongly impressed by many of the ideas which had been so vaguely and wildly presented to our imagination.

It remains to notice the pieces of poetry scattered through these volumes, many of which claim our attention; but we cannot stop to criticise them. There is a wild and desultory elegy, vol. ii, pp. 305–309, which, though not always strictly metrical, has passages of great pathos, as well as fancy. If the author of it be indeed, as he describes himself, young and inexperienced, without literary friend or counsellor, we earnestly exhort him to seek one on whose taste and judgment he can rely. He is now like an untutored colt, wasting his best vigour in irregular efforts, without either grace or object; but there is much in these volumes which promises a career that may at some future time astonish the public.

WOMEN; OR, POUR ET CONTRE.*

[Edinburgh Review, June, 1818.]

THE author of a successful tragedy has, in the general decay of the dramatic art which marks our age, a good right to assume that distinction in his title-page, and claim the attention due to superior and acknowledged talent. The faults of *Bertram* are those of an ardent and inexperienced author; but its beauties are undeniably of a high order; and the dramatist who has been successful in exciting pity and terror in audiences assembled to gape and stare at shows and processions, rather than to weep or tremble at the convulsions of human passion, has a title to the early and respectful attention of the critic.

Mr. Maturin, the acknowledged author of *Bertram*, a tragedy, is a clergyman on the Irish establishment, employed chiefly, if we mistake not, in the honourable task of assisting young persons during their classical studies at Trinity College, Dublin. He has been already a wanderer in the field of fiction, and is the author of the *House of Montorio*, a romance in the style of Mrs. Radcliffe, the *Wild Irish Boy*, and other tales.† The present work is framed

* *Women; or, Pour et Contre: A Tale.* By the author of BERTRAM, &c.

† [The Rev. Charles Robert Maturin, curate of St. Peter's, Dublin, an eccentric character, but a man of genius, shared the usual fate of irregular and incoherent genius, in a continued family warfare, with "elegant desires," poverty, and bailiffs. He died in October, 1824. Besides the present and preceding articles of review, Mr. Maturin published tales, called *The Milesian Chief*, 4 vols.; *The Wild Irish Boy*, 3 vols.; *Melmoth the Wanderer*, 4 vols.; and *The Albigenses*, 4 vols.; two tragedies—*Bertram*, and *Manuel; The Universe, a Poem;* and two volumes of sermons. Among other fantastic humours of this gentleman, it is said that when he wished his family to be aware that *the fit* was on him, he used to stick a wafer on his forehead.]

upon a different and more interesting model, pretending to the merit of describing the emotions of the human heart, rather than that of astonishing the reader by the accumulation of imaginary horrors, or the singular combinations of marvellous and perilous adventures. Accordingly, we think we can perceive marks of greater care than Mr. Maturin has taken the trouble to bestow upon his former works of fiction; and that which is a favourite with the author himself, is certainly most likely to become so with the public and with the critic. Upon his former works, the author has, in his preface, passed the following severe sentence.

"None of my former prose works have been popular. The strongest proof of which is, none of them arrived at a second edition; nor could I dispose of the copyright of any but of the *Milesian*, which was sold to Mr. Colburn for £80, in the year 1811.

"*Montorio* (misnomed by the bookseller *The Fatal Revenge*, a very bookselling appellation) had some share of popularity, but it was only the popularity of circulating libraries: it deserved no better; the date of that style of writing was out when I was a boy, and I had not powers to revive it. When I look over those books now, I am not at all surprised at their failure; for independent of their want of *external* interest (the strongest interest that books can have, even in this reading age), they seem to me to want *reality*, vraisemblance; the characters, situations, and language are drawn merely from imagination; my limited acquaintance with life denied me any other resource. In the tale which I now offer to the public, perhaps there may be recognised some characters which experience will not disown. Some resemblance to common life may be traced in them. On this I rest for the most part the interest of the narrative. The paucity of characters and incidents (the absence of all that constitutes the interest of fictitious biography in general) excludes the hope of this work possessing any other interest."

The preface concludes with an assurance, that the author will never trespass again in this kind;—a promise or threat which is as often made and as often broken as lovers' vows, and which the reader has no reason to desire should in the present case be more scrupulously adhered to, than by other authors of ancient and modern celebrity. Let us only see, what the work really deserves, a favourable reception from the public; and we trust Mr. Maturin may be moved once more to resume a species of composition so easy to a writer of rich fancy and ready powers, so delightful to the numerous class of readers, who have Gray's authority for sup-

posing it no bad emblem of paradise to lie all day on a couch and read new novels.

In analyzing *Women*, we are tempted to hesitate which end of the tale we should begin with. It is the business of the author to wrap up his narrative in mystery during its progress, to withdraw the veil from his mystery with caution, and inch as it were by inch, and to protract as long as possible the trying crisis " when any reader of common sagacity may foresee the inevitable conclusion;" a period after which neither interest of dialogue nor splendour of description, neither marriage dresses, nor settlement of estates, can protract the attention of the thorough-bred novel reader. The critic has an interest the very reverse of this. It is his business to make all things brief and plain to the most ordinary comprehension. He is a matter-of-fact sort of person, who, studious only to be brief and intelligible, commences with the commencement, according to the instructions of the giant Moulineau, " que tous ces recits qui commencent par le milieu ne font qu'embrouiller l'imagination." It is very true, that, in thus exercising our privilege, the author has something to complain of. We turn his wit the seamy side without, explain all his machinery, and the principles on which it moves before he causes it to play; and, like the persecution which the petty jealousy of his great neighbours at Hagley exercised on poor Shenstone, it seems as if we perversely conducted our readers to inconvenient points of view, and introduced them at the wrong end of a walk to detect a deception. Of such injuries, according to Johnson, the bard of the Leasowes was wont to complain heavily; and perhaps Mr. Maturin may be equally offended with us for placing the conclusion of his book at the beginning of our recital. But " let the stricken deer go weep;" —the cook would have more than enough to do, who thought it necessary to consult the eel at which extremity he would like the flaying to begin.

There was then once upon a time, in a remote province of Ireland, a certain man of wealth and wickedness, who combined the theory of infidelity with the practice of the most unbounded libertinism. By one of his mistresses, a female of a wild and enthusiastic character, who, though she had sacrificed her virtue, retained the most bigoted attachment to the Catholic religion, this person had a beautiful and

gifted daughter. The unfortunate mother, sensible of the dangers which the child must incur under the paternal roof, was detected in an attempt to remove it elsewhere, and driven by violence from the house of her paramour; not, however, before she had poured upon him and his innocent offspring, a curse the most solemn, bitter and wild that ever passed the lips of a human being. The daughter was bred up in the midst of luxury, and sedulously instructed in all that could improve an excellent understanding, by teachers of every language, and masters of every art. At the early age of fifteen, her chief instructor was an artful and accomplished Italian, who abused his trust, and seduced his pupil into a private marriage. A female child was the consequence of this union, and occasioned its being discovered. The father was inexorable, and drove the daughter from his presence; while the sordid husband, disappointed in his avaricious views, tore the child from the mother, returned it upon the hands of his relentless patron, carried off his wife to Italy, and turned to profit her brilliant talents of every kind, as an actress upon the public stage, where she became the most distinguished performer by whom it had ever been trod. The selfish husband, or rather tyrant, by whose instructions she had been taught to attain this eminence, died at length, when she had obtained the zenith of her reputation, and left Zaira under the assumed title of Madame Dalmatiana, mistress of her own destiny.

About this period her daughter had attained the age of fifteen years. The infidel grandfather had put her, while an infant, under the charge of an excellent woman, the wife of a wealthy banker. Both professed evangelical doctrines, or what is technically called Calvinistic Methodism. Eva was bred up in the same tenets, shared their religious, gloomy, and sequestered life, and passed for the niece of Mr. and Mrs. Wentworth. The grandfather made large remittances, which reconciled the banker to this adoption; the heart of his more amiable wife was won by the beauty and engaging disposition of her youthful ward.

A danger, however, hovered over Eva, from the superstitious and frantic obstinacy of her grandmother, who, as Zaira was beyond her reach, had transferred to Eva the anxious and unhesitating zeal with which she laboured to make acquisition of the souls of her descendants for the

benefit of the Catholic church. Reduced by choice more than necessity to the situation of a wandering beggar, this woman retained, it seems, amid her insanity, the power of laying schemes of violence; and, amongst her rags, possessed the means of carrying them into execution. She contrived forcibly to carry off her grand-daughter Eva, and to place her in a carriage, which was to transport her to an obscure hut in the vicinity of Dublin.

These events compose the underground or basement story of the narrative, to which the author introduces his company last of all, although we have thought proper to show its secret recesses, and the machinery which they contain, before examining the superstructure.

Without a metaphor the novel thus commences. De Courcy, a youth of large property, of talents and of virtue, fair and graceful in person, and cultivated in taste and understanding, but of a disposition at once fickle and susceptible, appears as the hero of the tale. In his seventeenth year, he is about to enter himself a student in Christ-Church College. The breaking down of a carriage had rendered him a pedestrian; and as he made his approach to the capital of Ireland through the shades of a delightful summer night, the chaise passes him, in which ruffians, hired as we have seen by no desperate admirer, as is usual on such occasions, but by her old frantic grandmother, are in the act of transporting Eva into the power of that person. To hear the cry of a female in distress, and to pursue the ravishers, although upon foot, was one and the same thing. An interesting and animated account of the chase is given, rendered more true by the knowledge of the localities exhibited by the author. De Courcy, losing and recovering the object of his pursuit as the carriage outstrips him in speed or is delayed by accident, follows them through the Phœnix park, and along the road to Chapel-Izod. Here, in a miserable cottage, he lights at last upon the object of his pursuit, in the keeping of the old hag by whose accomplices she had been carried off, and who, while they were absent about the necessary repairs of some damage sustained by the carriage, awaited their return to carry her to some place of greater security. She is thus forcibly described.

"Charles, who knew not what to answer, advanced; a woman then started forward from a dark corner, and stood wildly before

him, as if wishing to oppose him, she knew not how. She was a frightful and almost supernatural object; her figure was low, and she was evidently very old; but her muscular strength and activity were so great, that, combined with the fantastic wildness of her motions, it gave them the appearance of the gambols of a hideous fairy. She was in rags; yet their arrangement had something of a picturesque effect. Her short tattered petticoats, of all colours and of various lengths, depending in angular shreds, her red cloak hanging on her back, and displaying her bare bony arms, with hands whose veins were like ropes, and fingers like talons; her naked feet, with which, when she moved, she stamped, jumped, and beat the earth like an Indian squaw in a war dance; her face *tattooed* with the deepest indentings of time, want, wretchedness and evil passions; her wrinkles, that looked like channels of streams long flowed away; the eager motion with which she shook back her long matted hair, that looked like strings of the gray bark of the ash-tree, while eyes flashed through them whose light seemed the posthumous offspring of deceased humanity,—her whole appearance, gestures, voice, and dress, made De Courcy's blood run cold within him. They gazed on each other for some time, as if trying to make out each other's purpose, from faces dimly seen, till the woman, whose features seemed kindling by the red light into a fiend-like glare, appeared to discover that he was not the person whom she expected, and cried, in a voice at once shrill and hollow, like a spent blast, 'What is it brought you here?'—and, before he could answer, rushing forward, stood with her back against a door (which but for this motion he would not have observed), and waving her lean, nervous arms, exclaimed fiercely, 'Come no further at your peril!' "—Vol. i, 15–17.

The threats of this demoniacal personage were insufficient to deter De Courcy from forcing his way to the interior of the hut, where he beheld a beautiful, but almost inanimate form, lie stretched on a wretched pallet. Upon De Courcy's attempt to remove her, the frantic guardian again breaks into a transport of rage, which, however, does not prevent him from accomplishing his purpose amid the dire curses which she heaped upon him, and which are expressed in a tone of energy which marks the dialogue of this author.

"Take her, take her from me if you will, but take my curse with you; it will be heavier on your heart than her weight is on your arm. I never cursed the grass but it withered, or the sky but it grew dark, or the living creatures but they pined and wasted away. Now you bear her away like a corpse in your arms; and I see you following her corpse to the churchyard, and the white ribbons tying her shroud; her maiden name on her tomb-stone; no child to cry for her, and you that sent her to her grave wishing it was dug for you."—Vol. i, p. 24.

Unappalled by these denunciations of future vengeance, De Courcy conveyed Eva in his arms to a place of safety, and found the means of restoring her to her guardians the Wentworths. The seeds of a fever which had lurked in his constitution had been called into action by De Courcy's exertions upon this memorable night. On his recovery, a friend and fellow-student, himself something of a Methodist, conducts him to a place of worship frequented by those who held that persuasion, when he finds himself unexpectedly seated close to that lovely vision which he had seen but briefly on the night when he released her, and which had nevertheless haunted, ever since, not merely the delirious dreams of his fever, but the more sober moments of his reconvalescence. He is invited to the house of her guardians, where the society and conversation is described with the pencil of a master. The various effect of the peculiar doctrines which they professed, is described as they affected Mrs. Wentworth, a woman of strong sense, rigid rectitude, and a natural warmth of temper which religion had subdued; her husband, a cold-hearted Pharisee, whose head was so full of theology, that his heart had no room for Christian charity or human feeling; and Mr. Macowen, a preacher of the sect, a sensual hypocrite, whose disgusting attributes are something too forcibly described. The conversation of such a society was limited to evangelical subjects; or whatever appeared to diverge from the only tolerated topic, was brought back to it by main force, according to the manner in which the preachers of the seventeenth century spiritualized all temporal incidents and occupations, or rather degraded doctrines of the highest and most reverent import, by the base comparisons and associations with which they dared to interweave them.

"One man talked incessantly of the 'election of grace;' his mind literally seemed not to have room for another idea, every sentence, if it did not begin, ended with the same phrase, and every subject only furnished matter for its introduction. Dr. Thorpe's last sermon at Bethesda was spoken of in terms of high and merited panegyric.—'Very true,' said he; 'but—a—Did you think there was enough of election in it?' A late work of the same author (his clever pamphlet on the Catholic petition) was mentioned.—'But does he say anything of election in it?'—'There was no opportunity,' said Mr. Wentworth.—'Then he should have made one—Ah, I would give very little for a book that did not assert the election of grace!' Once seated in his election-saddle, he posted

on with alarming speed, and ended with declaring, that Elisha Coles on God's Sovereignty, was worth all the divinity that ever was written. 'I have a large collection of the works of godly writers,' said he, turning to De Courcy, 'but not one work that ever was, would I resign for that of Elisha Coles.'—'Won't you except the Bible?' said De Courcy, smiling.—'Oh, yes—the Bible—ay, to be sure, the Bible,' said the discomfited champion of election; 'but still, you know,'—and he continued to mutter something about Elisha Coles on God's Sovereignty.

"Another, who never stopped talking, appeared to De Courcy a complete evangelical *time-keeper;*—the same ceaseless ticking sound;—the same vacillating motion of the head and body; and his whole conversation turning on the various lengths of the sermons he had heard, of which it appeared, he was in the habit of listening to four every Sunday. 'Mr. Matthias preached exactly forty-eight minutes. I was at Mr. Cooper's exhortation at Plunket-street in the evening, and it was precisely fifty-three minutes.'—'And how many seconds?' said Mrs. Wentworth, smiling—for she felt the ridicule of this.

"Close to De Courcy were two very young men, who were comparing the respective progress they had made in the conversion of some of their relations. They spoke on this subject with a familiarity that certainly made De Courcy start.—'My aunt is almost entirely converted,' said one. 'She never goes to church now, though she never missed early prayers at St. Thomas's for forty years before. Now,' with a strange sort of triumph, 'now, is your sister converted, as much as that?'—'Yes—yes—she is,' answered the other, eagerly; 'for she burned her week's preparation yesterday, and my mother's too along with it.'"—Vol. i, 64–67.

De Courcy in vain attempted to assimilate his conversation to that of the party, by quoting such religious works as were known to him. The chilling words "Arminian" or "heterodox" were applied to those popular preachers whose sermons he ventured to quote; and even Cœlebs was appealed to without effect, as he was given to understand that Hannah More, however apostolical in the eyes of Lord Orford, was held light in the estimation of the present system. Thus repulsed from the society of the gentlemen—

"When he arrived in the drawing-room, the same monotonous and repulsive stillness; the same dry circle (in whose verge no spirit could be raised) reduced him to the same petrifying medium with all around. The females were collected round the tea-table; the conversation was carried on in pensive whispers; a large table near them was spread with evangelical tracts, &c. The room was hung with dark-brown paper; and the four unsnuffed candles burning dimly (the light of two of them almost absorbed in the dark baize that covered the table on which they stood,) gave just the light that Young might have written by, when the Duke of Grafton sent him a human skull, with a taper in it, as an appro-

priate candelabrum for his tragedy writing-desk. The ladies sometimes took up these tracts, shook a head of deep conviction over their contents, laid them down, and the same stillness recurred. The very hissing of the tea-urn, and the crackling of the coals, was a relief to De Courcy's ears."—Vol. i, 69, 70.

Notwithstanding the gloom and spiritual pride in which she had been educated, the beauty and sweet disposition of Eva burned with pure and pale splendour, like a lamp in a sepulchre; and De Courcy nourished for her that desperate attachment with which youths of seventeeen resign themselves to the first impression of the tender passion. He becomes in love—to pining, to sickness, almost to death; and at length prevails upon his worthy and affectionate guardian to make proposals for him to the guardians of Eva. Mr. and Mrs. Wentworth both urge the utter impropriety of their countenancing a connection between young persons so opposite in religious opinions; but are gradually compelled to give ground—the former by consideration of De Courcy's worldly wealth, to which his religious opinions had not rendered him indifferent—and his more amiable wife, by her compassion for the state of the young Eva, and her discovering that he had awakened sentiments in the breast of Eva corresponding to his own.

De Courcy is therefore received, on the footing of an acknowledged lover, into the house of the Wentworths, exposed, however, to the persecutions of the father and many of his visitors, who were resolved at all rates to achieve his conversion.

"Charles at first yielded from timidity, or answered from complaisance, but at length found himself, by the pertinacity of the disputants, inextricably involved in the mazes of controversy. Every hour he was called on to discuss or to decide on points above human comprehension; he was pressed with importunities about his spiritual state, which was represented to depend on his adopting the separate creed of every individual speaker, with all its divisions and subdivisions, and shades of difference, that seemed to him to give to airy nothing 'a local habitation and a name.'"—P. 117.

Even when he turned from this persecution to Eva, he did not at all times find the relief which he expected. Her purity, her inexperience, her timidity, and the absolute subjection of her mind to religious feeling exclusively, prevented her from understanding or returning the warmth of affection with which her lover regarded her. She was cold and con-

strained; blamed herself for the slightest deviation into worldly passion and human feeling—in short, the person in the world least qualified to return the affection of an enthusiastic young Irishman. Her accomplishments were upon the same narrow and constrained scale as her feelings. She could discourse exquisite music, but not one earthly song; and the warm expressions of human passion which occurred in her evangelical hymns were only addressed to the Deity with an amorous pastoral feeling, which seemed to her lover equally unsuitable and nonsensical. Again, Eva, in her little sphere of enjoyments, cultivated drawing; but it was only that of flowers,—objects as pure, as fair, and as inanimate, we had almost said, as herself. To feelings of imagination and passion, she was equally averse and impassive; and such appeared to be the tranquil purity of her still and orderly existence, that De Courcy felt it almost criminal to strive to awaken her imagination, "to delude her with the visions of fancy;" and that it resembled the attempt of the fallen angels in Milton to "mingle strange fire" with the lights of heaven. He did his best, however, and called in the aid of ancient and modern bards to enable him to dispute the too exclusive empire of heaven in her bosom.

"'Why are you so silent, Eva?' he said, as they returned from the conventicle which the Wentworths frequented.—'I was thinking of that fine text.'—'What was it?'—'What was it?' said Eva, almost relinquishing his arm, from a feeling stronger and more unpleasant than surprise, for she had no idea of any one forgetting the text so soon.—'I have a bad memory—or a bad headache,' said De Courcy, trying to smile away her amazement—'or, perhaps, I would rather hear it from your lips than those of that dark-browed sallow man.'—'It is little matter,' said Eva, 'from what lips we hear the truth. The text was, 'God is Love.''—'Oh, Eva!' said De Courcy, under an impulse he could not resist, 'do we require anything more than this dark-blue sky, this balmy air, those lovely stars that glitter like islands of light in an immeasurable ocean, and point out our destination amid its bright and boundless infinity, to tell us that 'God is Love?' Why must we learn it in the close and heated air of a conventicle, with all its repulsive accompaniments of gloomy looks, sombre habits, dim lights, nasal hymns? Are these the interpreters the Deity employs as the intimations of his love?'—'They are,' said Eva, awakened to an answer, but never thus awakened for more than a moment—'they are. For to the poor the gospel is preached, and they seldom feel anything of the atmosphere but its inclemency,—to the sick, and they cannot encounter it,—to the unhappy, and they cannot enjoy it.'"—P. 142-144.

It was scarce possible that this conflict should have long continued without the lover becoming colder, and more sensible to the various disagreeable points of his situation, or the beloved condescending to descend a few steps towards earth from the point of quietism which she occupied. De Courcy began to relax. Ball-rooms, billiard-tables, and theatres disputed the charms even of Eva's society, since he could only enjoy it in the gloomy conventicle, or scarce less gloomy mansion of the Wentworths; and then, alternately repulsed by her coldness, and exasperated by the officious zeal of Wentworth, or the more studied insults of Macowen, who looked upon his addresses to Eva as an interference with his own views. At the moment when the irreconcilable difference between his sentiments and habits, and those of all in Dominic street, became less capable of disguise, and just as the good man Wentworth was triumphing in an approaching controversy, in which a Socinian, a Catholic, an Arian, and an Arminian were, in knightly phrase, to keep the barriers against twelve resolute Catholics, De Courcy discovers in the papers the arrival of Madame Dalmatiani, the first singer, as well as the first tragic actress in Europe. This lady was pronounced, by the general report of Europe, to be a Siddons, a Catalini, a La Tiranna, with all the terrible Medea graces, all the Muses in short, and all the Graces embodied in the form of a female of exquisite beauty. To De Courcy's ill-timed eulogium on this celebrated performer, Wentworth answered in a strain of triumph. "Every histriomastrix, from Tertullian down to Prynne and Collier, might have been raised from the dead with joy. He cursed stages, stage-plays, stage-players, frequenters and abettors, from Thespis down to Mr. Harris and the committee of Drury-Lane, lamp-lighters, scene-shifters, and candle-snuffers inclusive, not forgetting a by-blow at De Courcy for visiting those *tents of Kedar*." The votary of the drama and its abominator parted in mutual wrath, and De Courcy had an additional motive, besides those of curiosity and interest, to go to the theatre: he desired to show his independence, and his sense of Wentworth's illiberal prejudices.

To the theatre, accordingly, he went, and the appearance and effect produced by this celebrated actress, is thus vividly described.

"A brilliant audience, lights, music, and the murmur of de-

lighted expectation, prepared Charles for a far different object from Eva. What a contrast, in the very introduction, between the dark habits, pale lights, solemn music, and awful language of a conventicle, and the gaiety and splendour of a theatre! He felt already disposed to look with delight on one who was so brightly harbingered, though it was amid a scene so different his first impressions of passion had been received and felt. The curtain rose: and, in a few moments after, Madame Dalmatiani entered. She rushed so rapidly on the stage, and burst with such an overwhelming cataract of sound on the ear, in a bravura that seemed composed apparently not to task, but to defy the human voice, that all eyes were dazzled, and all ears stunned; and several minutes elapsed before a thunder of applause testified the astonishment from which the audience appeared scarcely then to respire. She was in the character of a princess, alternately reproaching and supplicating a tyrant for the fate of her lover; and such was her perfect self-possession, or rather the force with which she entered into the character, that she no more noticed the applauses that thundered around her, than if she had been the individual she represented; and such was the illusion of her figure, her costume, her voice, and her attitudes, that in a few moments the inspiration with which she was agitated was communicated to every spectator. The sublime and sculpture-like perfection of her form—the classical, yet unstudied undulation of her attitudes, almost conveying the idea of a sybil or a prophetess under the force of ancient inspiration—the resplendent and almost overpowering lustre of her beauty, her sun-like eyes, her snowy arms, her drapery blazing with diamonds, yet falling round her figure in folds as light as if the zephyrs had flung it there, and delighted to sport among its wavings; her imperial loveliness, at once attractive and commanding, and her voice developing all that nature could give, or art could teach, maddening the ignorant with the discovery of a new sense, and daring the scientific beyond the bounds of expectation or of experience—mocking their amazement, and leaving the ear breathless.—All these burst at once on Charles, whose heart, and senses, and mind, reeled in intoxication, and felt pleasure annihilated by its own excess.

"It was for the last scene she had reserved her powers—those astonishing powers that could blend the most exquisite tones of melody with the fiercest agitations of passion, that could delight the ear, while they shook the soul. She came forward, after having stabbed the tyrant to avenge the fate of her lover. Her dress was deranged—her long black hair floated on her shoulders—the flowers and diamonds that bound it were flung back—and her bare arms, her dark fixed eyes, the unconscious look with which she grasped the dagger, and the unfelt motion with which from time to time she raised her hand to wipe off the trace of blood from her pale forehead, made the spectators almost tremble for the next victim of one who seemed armed with the beauty, the passions, and the terrors of an avenging goddess. Applauses that shook the house had marked every scene but the last. When the curtain dropt, a dead silence pervaded the whole theatre, and a deep sigh pro-

claimed relief from oppression no longer supportable."—Vol. i. p. 160–164.

It cannot have escaped the intelligent reader, that this superb queen of terror and sorrow, this mistress of all the movements of the human heart, is the highly accomplished, brilliant, and facinating Zaira, the mother of the simple, retired, and evangelical Eva; and it can as little escape his penetration, that she is about to become the unconscious rival of her unfortunate child, in the affections of the fickle De Courcy. The death of her wretched husband had left Zaira possessed of the wealth which her talents had acquired, and she was now come to Ireland, with the hope of obtaining from her father, some lights concerning the destiny of her infant child. By his stern injunction, she retained her borrowed name and public character.

De Courcy had a nominal guardian, a silly man of fortune, called Sir Richard Longwood, whose silly wife had presented him with two daughters, whom we must pronounce rather too silly for the rank which they are represented as holding in good society. At the house and the parties of Lady Longwood, De Courcy is thrown into the society of Zaira, rendered doubly dangerous by her various talents and extent of cultivation, as well as her brilliancy of taste, feeling, mind, and manners, forming so strong a contrast with the uniform simplicity and limited character of poor Eva. Yet it was Eva whom he visited after the first evening spent in the fascinating society of Zaira, ere yet he paid his respects to the syren whose image had begun to eclipse her in his bosom.

"Eva and her aunt were at work; the room was large: the dark brown paper, two candles dimly burning on the work table, the silent quiet figures that sat beside it, the shelves loaded with volumes of divinity, the still sombrous air of everything; no musical instrument, no flowers, no paintings; what a contrast to the scene he had last witnessed, and to the scene he was hastening to!"—P. 199.

Here he asked for books, and had his choice of *Sandeman's Letters*, *Boston's Fourfold State*, *Gill on Isaiah*, or *Owen on the Hebrews*. Milton was the only author of genius permitted to hold a place on these well-purged shelves. Milton, De Courcy began to read, but was soon silenced by Mrs. Wentworth's severe remarks on the lapse of that great poet into the tenets of Baxterianism. The dulness of the party was disturbed, not enlivened, by the arrival of old

Wentworth, full primed for controversy, and his pockets stuffed with evangelical pamphlets. His violence and prejudices again hurry the fickle lover to the house of Madame Dalmatiani, where all was light and music, garlands and colours, beauty and genius. The mistress passed through apartments filled with groups of the gay and the learned, where speech was without effort, and silence without *ennui;* where rare volumes, rich ornaments, classical statues and pictures, as well as the number of the attendants and splendour of the establishment, showed that the proprietor was the favourite of fortune, as well as of nature. But her own presence was the principal charm. Her beauty, her musical talents, her taste, were alternately taxed for their share of the festival. She conversed with the various professors of the arts of poetry and of general literature, in a style various as suited their different pursuits, like Cleopatra, giving audience to each ambassador at her court in his own native language.

A friend, by name Montgomery, the same who first conducted De Courcy to a Methodist meeting-house, and who himself nourished a hopeless, but most generous passion for Eva, saw with alarm that De Courcy preferred the dangerous mansion of Madame Dalmatiani, and endeavoured, more zealously than wisely, to reclaim the wanderer. What had Dominic-street to present, that could be opposed to Zaira's palace of enchanted enjoyments? At one time a fierce controversy betwixt Macowen and one of his pupils, a "babe in grace," as his spiritual guide termed him, "to be fed with milk."

"He was a man turned of fifty, six feet two inches high, broad and bulky in proportion, with an atrabilious complexion, a voice of thunder, and a tread that shook the room. The contrast was unspeakably ridiculous. 'Babe!' murmured De Courcy; 'Babel' echoed Montgomery, and both had some difficulty in subduing their rebellious muscles to the placid stagnation that overspread the faces around them.—But the calm was of short continuance —This Quinbus Flestrin, this man-mountain of a catechumen, came, not to sit with lowly docility at the feet of his teachers, but to prove that he was able to teach them. If he was a babe, as De Courcy said, 'tetchy and wayward was his infancy;' no ill-nursed, ill-tempered, captious, squalling brat, was ever a greater terror and torment in the nursery. He resisted, he retorted, he evaded, he parried, he contradicted, carped and 'cavilled on the ninth part of a hair.'

"Macowen lost his ground; then he lost his breath; then he lost

his temper; scintillating eyes, quivering lips, and streaks of stormy red marking their brown cheeks, gave signal of fierce debate. All the weapons of fleshly warfare were soon drawn in the combat, and certain words that would have led to a different termination of the dispute among men of this world, passed quick and high between them. Struck with shame, they paused—a dreary pause of sullen anger and reluctant shame.—'Now, shan't we have a word of prayer,' said Mr. Wentworth, who had been watching them with as much deliberate enjoyment as an ancient Roman would a spectacle of gladiators."—Pp. 239-241.

A more edifying scene was that of Eva herself engaged in teaching a school of little orphans, whom she maintained out of her allowance, and educated from her own lips. Yet, even amid this most laudable employment, could the fantastic delicacy of De Courcy, rendered more punctilious by the society of Zaira, find matter of offence. The dulness of the children, their blunders, their mingled brogues, their dirt, and all else that was unpleasing to the sense and the imagination, rendered the task even of clothing the naked, and instructing the ignorant and fatherless, disgusting in the eyes of a delicate and somewhat selfish lover of the fine arts.

These and similar scenes of contrast succeed to each other with great effect; and the feeble and vacillating mind of De Courcy is alternately agitated by returning affection for Eva, aided by compassion and by a sense of the cruelty and dishonour of deserting her, and by the superior force of character of her more accomplished rival. It becomes daily more and more plain, that the weaker feeling must give way to that which was more strong and energetic, especially when Zaira, after one or two trying interviews, agrees to banish the name of love from their intimacy, and to term it only an intimate friendship, resolves herself to adopt the task of preceptress to the bride of De Courcy, and transfer to her those accomplishments which too visibly enchanted the heart of her susceptible friend. This specious arrangement is well ridiculed by Zaira's correspondent, a French lady of fashion, having all the frivolity, the good nature, the tact and perception of character proper to one who filled a high place in the Parisian *beau monde;* and Zaira's eyes become opened to the real state of her affections. Meanwhile, the continued operation of contrast alienates De Courcy still further from the gentle Eva, and attaches him more firmly to her brilliant rival. A thunder-storm frightens

Eva into a state of insensibility. Another thunder-storm surprising a party of pleasure, amid the romantic scenery of the Wicklow mountains, gives Zaira the opportunity of exhibiting courage at once heroic and philosophical. All circumstances combined to show that De Courcy's hastily formed engagement with Eva will not and cannot come to a good issue. The fiendish hag from whose power De Courcy had delivered her, appears upon the scene, again and again crossing the stage like an evil-presaging apparition. One of the most frightful of these appearances takes place during a great fire in Dublin, to the progress of which Zaira and De Courcy are witnesses. The scene is described with much terrible grandeur.

"All was life, though it was the hour of repose; and all was light, terrible light, though the sky was as dark as December midnight. They attempted to ascend Cork-hill; that was rendered impossible by the crowd; and winding another way through lanes, of which the reader may be spared the names, they got into Fishamble-street. Many fearful intimations of the danger struck them there.—The hollow rolling of the fire-engines, so distinct in their sound;—the cries of 'clear the way,' from the crowd, who opened their dense tumultuous mass for the passage, and instantly closed again;—the trampling of the cavalry on the wet pavement, threatening, backing, facing among the crowd;—the terrible hollow knocking on the pavement, to break open the pipes for water, which was but imperfectly supplied;—the bells of all the neighbouring churches, St. John's, St. Werburgh's, St. Bride's, and the deep tremendous toll of Christ-church, mingled with, but heard above all, as if it summoned the sufferers to prepare, not for life but for death, and poured a kind of defiance on the very efforts it was rung to invite them to. All this came at once on them, as they entered Fishamble-street, from a wretched lane through which they had been feeling their way. They emerged from it; *and when they did*, the horrors of the conflagration burst on them at once. The fire, confined in the sphere of its action, amidst warehouses thickly enclosed, burst in terrible volumes above the tops of the houses, and seemed like a volcano, of which no one could see the crater.

"On the steps of St. John's Church, a number were collected. They had snatched the furniture from their miserable lodgings; piled it up in the street, where the guard were watching it, and now sat patiently in the open air to see their habitations reduced to ashes, unknowing where they were to rest their heads that night.

"All the buildings in the neighbourhood were strongly illuminated by the fire, and still more strongly (though partially from time to time) by lights held out by the inhabitants from their windows, from the shops to the attics, six stories high; and the groups

below flashing out in the light, and disappearing in the darkness, their upturned faces, marked with the shifting traces of fear, horror, defiance, and despair, presented a subject for Salvator. No banditti, in the darkest woods of the Apennines, illuminated only by lightning, ever showed more fearful wildness of expression, or more picturesque distortion of attitude. Just then the flames sunk for a moment, but, rising again, instantly poured forth a volume of light, that set the whole horizon in a blaze. There was a shriek from the crowd, that seemed rather like the cry of triumph than despair. It is certain, that a people like the Irish, whose imagination is stronger than any other of their intellectual faculties, can utter cries of delight at the sight of a splendid conflagration that is consuming their dwellings.

"The last burst of flames produced a singular effect. The buildings in Castle-street (below the range of the illumination) lay in complete darkness—darkness more intense from the surrounding light, and the tower and spire of St. Werburgh's, (it had *then* a fantastically elegant spire,) by their height in the horizon, caught the whole effect of the fire, and appeared like a fairy palace of flame, blazing and built among the clouds."—Vol. ii, pp. 101-105.

Amidst this scene of horror and sublimity, rushes forth the beggar maniac, bursting through the crowd with irresistible force, and planting herself opposite to Zaira.

"She was, as usual, in rags, and as the strong light gleamed on her hoary streaming hair, her wild features, and her wilder attire, she seemed fit to act the prompting and exulting fury who stood by Nero when he surveyed from his tower Rome in flames, which his own orders had kindled, and which his own orders (it is said) forbid to be extinguished. She began her usual wild dance, regardless of the crowd, and of the terrible cause of their assembling, and mingled, from time to time, exclamations in a voice between recitative and singing, that seemed modulated to the music of invisible and infernal spirits. It was very singular of this woman, that though her accent was perfectly Irish, her expressions were not so; her individual feeling seemed to swallow up and overwhelm her nationality. Wherever she was, she seemed perfectly alone —alone alike amid the mountains of Wicklow or the multitudes of Dublin; all times, circumstances, and persons seemed to yield to the single, mysterious, undefinable feeling that always governed and inspired her; and while it made her an object of supreme terror to all others, made all others objects of supreme contempt to her." —Vol. ii, pp. 107, 108.

As she attempted to seize upon Zaira, of whose individuality she retained some imperfect recollection, she was forced back by De Courcy.

"'Have you no touch of nature in ye?' said the woman, suddenly and fearfully altering her tone, and clinging close and closer to Zaira. 'Do you know who (*whom*) it is you drive away?—Have

ye no touch of nature in ye?—Oh, these hands are withered, but how often they have clasped thee round that white neck!—Oh, these hairs are gray, but how often have you played with them when they were as black and as bright as your own!—Sorrow for you has turned them white. Oh, look upon me—look upon me on my knees. I don't know *your name now*, but you should never have forgot mine. Oh, have ye no nature in you, and I kneeling on the cold stones *before my own!*' "—Vol. ii, pp. 112, 113.

These ominous curses were prophetic. The departure of Zaira for the continent brought De Courcy's apostasy to a crisis. Her father having died suddenly, deprived her of every clue, as she thought, to discover where her child existed; and the discovery of how far her affections were like to hurry her, was another motive for her departure. She saw De Courcy once more, however, and the result of their interview was, his obtaining permission to attend her to the continent on the footing of a companion, who, at the expiry of a twelvemonth, might claim possession of her hand. There is a letter of the deserted and heart-broken Eva to her faithless lover, which abounds with touches of beautiful and natural feeling. She thanked him for the wholesome cruelty which had restored to heaven a heart which, for his sake, had begun to love the world. She forgave him, and concluded with this pathetic prophecy.

"You will return in spring; in spring you will be back with your triumphant beautiful bride: perhaps you will visit this room from some lingering feeling; you will see the flowers, the books, the music you once loved, all in their place, where you formerly wished to see them; and perhaps you will ask, where am *I*.—'I came,' says the eastern tale you told me, 'to the tombs of my friends, and asked where are they? and echo answered, *Where?*'" —Vol. ii, p. 276.

In the hope of rendering her juvenile lover all that was worthy, as she already accounted him all that was amiable, Zaira had yielded to the culpable weakness of becoming accessory to his breach of promise. She had not doubted that she could attach him to her by the double charms of beauty and talent, added to those of superior intellect. But Paris—that Paris in which even the lover of the Princess of Babylon became disloyal—was doomed to prove the vanity of her expectations.

The fidelity of a man is like the virtue of a female when it has succumbed in one temptation,—the sense of fine feeling is lost, and it seldom resists another. Yet, we are far from

thinking the second defection of Charles de Courcy, amiable and generous as he is painted, as half so probably *motived* as his first offence against the code of constancy. His desertion of the simple and narrow-minded Eva for a woman of such brilliant talent and powers as Zaira, while it was highly blameworthy, is but too probable an occurrence. But that, unsated by possession, and witnessing the prodigious effects produced by Zaira's talents on all that was brave and illustrious in Europe, and which was then (in 1814) assembled in Paris, he should have wantonly deserted the sacred object of his affections, and preferred to her, for ever so short a space, a certain Eulalie de Térranges, so inferior to' her in all respects, exceeds every extended limit of indulgence which we can allow to a susceptible and fickle disposition, fixes upon Mr. Maturin's hero the odious character of a male coquette, and makes us almost identify a character so effeminate with that ascribed by the satirist to a countryman of De Courcy's—

> " A motley figure of the Fribble tribe,
> Which heart can scarce conceive or pen describe,
> Nor male nor female neither, and yet both,
> Of neuter gender, though of Irish growth,
> And six foot suckling, mincing in its gait,
> Affected, peevish, prim, and delicate."

Lest we should appear, however, to have judged too harshly of De Courcy, we will briefly recapitulate the various motives alleged for his a second time breaking the most solemn ties that a man can form, and deserting Zaira in Paris, as he had deserted Eva in Dublin. The blaze of Zaira's mental superiority seems to have become too scorching for De Courcy to bear, when he was no longer screened by the opportunity of retiring to contrast its brilliancy with the more calm moonlight character of Eva. She had pretensions, besides, to guide and to instruct him; and no man cares to be guided and instructed by a woman. Moreover, in the opinion of an experienced Frenchman, Zaira was *trop exigeante*, too determined to dazzle and to delight, and to inspire every moment with rapture of one description or another. "Pleasure itself, so protracted," says this connoisseur, "so exaggerated, must become pain. It is like the punishment of Regulus, cutting off the eyelids to turn the light of the sun into torture." Besides, there was the

dissipation of Parisian society, and the shame of being seen one of the train of an actress—he a gentleman of fortune and birth; and there was the discovery, that Zaira had been a wife and a mother, which she had imprudently left him to receive from others; and there was a letter of expostulation from his kind guardian, conjuring him to avoid a disgraceful alliance, and not to suffer himself to be trailed over the continent, the overgrown pupil of a female pedagogue. Lastly, there was a natural love of change, and some regret after the discarded Eva. If all these reasons cannot palliate De Courcy's second apostasy to the reader, we must abandon him to their severest condemnation for deserting Zaira, and announce his speedy return to Ireland. It was in vain that she degraded herself by following him even in the streets—it was impossible to recall his affections. The arrival of Montgomery, with intelligence that Eva was in a deep decline, brought his resolution to a crisis, and he quitted Paris. From this period there is little more occasion for narrative. The author traces the various steps by which Eva approaches to the harbour where there is rest from each earthly storm—the affectionate services of her adopted mother—the selfish speculations of Wentworth, and the more basely selfish brutalities of the vile Tartuffe Macowen. With the history of Eva's graduated decline, is contrasted the despairing state of Zaira; her conferences and controversies with Cardonneau, a French sceptical philosopher; her escape from his snares; her resolution to become a devotee, and her horror at finding herself unable to entertain that warmth of enthusiastic zeal necessary to give effect to the Catholic nostrum of penance; her resolution to put herself to death, with all the preparations which she solemnly adopted; and her abandoning her purpose, startled by an impressive dream or vision, which impelled her to follow her versatile lover to Ireland. All these moods of a despairing mind are well described, but too much protracted. The mind becomes weary of accumulated horrors, having all reference to the same person and set of events, and belonging to a catastrophe which is inevitable, and full in view. The skill of the author, his knowledge of the human mind, his talent at expressing sorrow, in all the varieties of her melancholy language, proves unequal to the task—during the first perusal at least—of securing unwearied attention. His labours seem as if they were employed to

diversify or adorn a long straight avenue of yews and cypresses, terminating in the full view of a sepulchre.

At length, however, the various persons of the narrative, pursuers and pursued, are reassembled in Dublin. De Courcy—his own health destroyed by remorse and the conflict of contending passions, dares to solicit an interview with Eva—dares to confide his repentance to Mrs. Wentworth, with whose character, naturally warm and even passionate, though now subjected to the control of religion, the reader has been already made acquainted. We have no hesitation in placing the meeting betwixt this lady and the penitent who had wounded her peace so bitterly, by the side of the pathetic scenes of the same sort in Richardson. But we have been already too liberal in quotations; and the conclusion of the tale must be briefly summed up. In her wanderings through Dublin, Zaira finds her maniac mother on her deathbed; and learns from her the fact, that she had been the unconscious rival of her own daughter, and the means of her descending to an untimely grave. After this communication, made with the same wild and impressive dignity with which Mr. Maturin has all along invested this person, the unhappy woman expires; and the yet more unhappy Zaira hastens to Wentworth-street, where she finds Eva just dead. De Courcy also slept, to awake no more; and the author thus closes his melancholy narrative.

"The following spring, the Miss Longwoods, gay and happy, were escorted by youthful, titled bridegrooms into that very church. They entered it fluttering in bridal finery; and as they quitted it, their steps trod lightly on the graves of De Courcy and Eva.—Such is the condition of life.

————"Zaira still lives, and lives in Ireland. A spell seems to bind her to the death-place of her daughter and lover. Her talents are gone, at least they are no longer exerted: The *oracles* may still be there, but it is only the tempest of grief that now scatters their leaves. Like Carathis in the vaults of Eblis, her hand is constantly pressed on her heart, in token of the fire that is burning there for ever; and those who are near her, constantly hear her repeat, 'My child—I have murdered my child!' When great talents are combined with calamity, their union forms the *tenth wave* of human suffering;—grief becomes inexhaustible from the unhappy fertility of genius,—and the serpents that devour us are generated out of our own vitals."—Vol. iii, pp. 407, 408.

The length of our analysis, and of our quotations, are the best proof of the pleasure with which we have read this

moral and interesting tale,—and may stand in place of eulogy. We have also hinted at some of the author's errors; and we must now, in all candour and respect, mention one of considerable importance, which the reader has perhaps anticipated. It respects the resemblance between the character and fate of Zaira and Corinne—a coincidence so near, as certainly to deprive Mr. Maturin of all claim to originality, so far as this brilliant and well-painted character is concerned. In her accomplishments, in her beauty, in her talents, in her falling a victim to the passion of a fickle lover, Zaira closely resembles her distinguished prototype. Still, however, she is Corinne in Ireland, contrasted with other personages, and sustaining a different tone of feeling and conversation and argument; so that we pardon the want of originality of conception, in consideration of the new lights thrown upon this interesting female, who, in the full career of successful talent, and invested with all the glow of genius, sacrifices the world of taste and of science for an unhappily-placed affection. On the other hand, the full praise, both of invention and execution, must be allowed to Maturin's sketch of Eva—so soft, so gentle, so self-devoted—such a mixture of the purity of heaven with the simplicity of earth, concealing the most acute feelings under the appearance of devout abstraction, and unable to express her passion otherwise than by dying for it. The various impressions received by good and by bad dispositions from the profession of methodistical or evangelical tenets, form a curious chapter in the history of our modern manners. Mr. Maturin has used the scalpel, not we think unfairly, but with professional rigour and dexterity, in anatomizing the effects of a system which is making way amongst us with increasing strength, and will one day have its influence on the fate perhaps of nations. But we resume our criticisms. The character of De Courcy we will not resume; it is provokingly inconsistent; and we wish the ancient fashion of the Devil flying off with false-hearted lovers, as in the ballad of the Wandering Prince of Troy, had sustained no change in his favour.

Indeed, such a catastrophe would not have been alien to the genius of Mr. Maturin, who, in the present, as well as in former publications, has shown some desire to wield the wand of the enchanter, and to call in the aid of supernatural horrors. While De Courcy was in the act of transferring

his allegiance from Eva to Zaira, the phantom of the former, her *wraith*—as we call in Scotland the apparition of a living person—glides past him, arrayed in white, with eyes closed, and face pale and colourless, and is presently afterwards seen lying beneath his feet as he assists Zaira into the carriage. Eva has a dream, corresponding to the apparition in all its circumstances. This incident resembles one which we have read in our youth in Aubrey, Baxter, or some such savoury and sapient collector of ghost-stories; but we chiefly mention it, to introduce a remarkable alteration in the tragedy of *Bertram*, adopted by the author, we believe, with considerable regret. It consists in the retrenchment of a passage or two of great poetical beauty, in which Bertram is represented as spurred to the commission of his great crimes by the direct agency of a supernatural and malevolent being. We have been favoured with a copy of the lines by a particular friend and admirer of the author, to whom he presented the manuscript copy of his play, in which alone they exist. The Prior, in his dialogue with Bertram, mentions

————"The dark knight of the forest,
So from his armour named and sable helm,
Whose unbarred vizor mortal never saw.
He dwells alone; no earthly thing lives near him,
Save the hoarse raven croaking o'er his towers,
And the dank weeds muffling his stagnant moat.
Bertram. I'll ring a summons on his barred portal
Shall make them through their dark valves rock and ring.
Prior. Thou'rt mad to take the quest.—Within my memory
One solitary man did venture there—
Dark thoughts dwelt with him, which he sought to vent.
Unto that dark compeer we saw his steps,
In winter's stormy twilight, seek that pass—
But days and years are gone, and he returns not.
Bertram. What fate befell him there?
Prior. The manner of his end was never known.
Bertram. That man shall be my mate—Contend not with me
Horrors to me are kindred and society.
Or man, or fiend, he hath won the soul of Bertram.

Bertram is afterwards discovered alone, wandering near the fatal tower, and describes the effect of the awful interview which he had courted.

Bertram. Was it a man or fiend?—Whate'er it was
It hath dwelt wonderfully with me—
All is around his dwelling suitable;
The invisible blast to which the dark pines groan,

The unconscious tread to which the dark earth echoes,
The hidden waters rushing to their fall,
These sounds of which the causes are not seen
I love, for they are like my fate mysterious—
How towr'd his proud form through the shrouding gloom,
How spoke the eloquent silence of its motion,
How through the barred vizor did his accents
Roll their rich thunder on their pausing soul!
And though his mailed hand did shun my grasp,
And though his closed morion hid his feature,
Yea, all resemblance to the face of man,
I felt the hollow whisper of his welcome,
I felt those unseen eyes were fix'd on mine,
If eyes indeed were there——
Forgotten thoughts of evil, still-born mischiefs,
Foul fertile seeds of passion and of crime,
That wither'd in my heart's abortive core,
Rous'd their dark battle at his trumpet-peal:
So sweeps the tempest o'er the slumbering desert,
Waking its myriad hosts of burning death:
So calls the last dread peal the wandering atoms
Of blood and bone and flesh and dust-worn fragments,
In dire array of ghastly unity,
To bide the eternal summons—
I am not what I was since I beheld him—
I was the slave of passion's ebbing sway—
All is condensed, collected, callous now—
The groan, the burst, the fiery flash is o'er,
Down pours the dense and darkening lava-tide,
Arresting life and stilling all beneath it.

Enter two of his band observing him.

First Robber. Sees't thou with what a step of pride he stalks.—
Thou hast the dark night of the forest seen;
For never man, from living converse come,
Trod with such step or flash'd with eye like thine.

Second Robber. And hast thou of a truth seen the dark night?

Bertram (turning on him suddenly). Thy hand is chill'd with fear—Well! shivering craven,
Say I have seen him—wherefore dost thou gaze?
Long'st thou for tale of goblin-guarded portal?
Of giant champion whose spell-forged mail
Crumbled to dust at sound of magic horn—
Banner of sheeted flame whose foldings shrunk
To withering weeds that o'er the battlements
Wave to the broken spell—or demon-blast
Of winded clarion whose fell summons sinks
To lonely whisper of the shuddering breeze
O'er the charm'd towers———

First Robber. Mock me not thus—Hast met him of a truth?—

Bertram. Well, fool—

First Robber. Why then heaven's benison be with you.
Upon this hour we part—farewell for ever.

For mortal cause I bear a mortal weapon—
But man that leagues with demons lacks not man."

The description of the fiend's port and language,—the effect which the conference with him produces upon Bertram's mind,—the terrific dignity with which the intercourse with such an associate invests him, and its rendering him a terror even to his own desperate banditti,—is all well conceived, and executed in a grand and magnificent strain of poetry; and, in the perusal, supposing the reader were carrying his mind back to the period when such intercourse between mortals and demons was considered as matter of indisputable truth, the story acquires probability and consistency, even from that which is in itself not only improbable but impossible. The interview with the incarnate fiend of the forest would, in these days, be supposed to have the same effect upon the mind of Bertram, as the "metaphysical aid" of the witches produces upon that of Macbeth, awakening and stimulating that appetite for crime, which slumbered in the bosom of both, till called forth by supernatural suggestion. At the same time, while we are happy to preserve a passage of such singular beauty and power, we approve of the taste which retrenched it in action. The *suadente diabolo* is now no longer a phrase even in our indictments; and we fear his satanic majesty, were he to appear on the stage in modern times, would certainly incur the appropriate fate of damnation.*

To return to the present work.—We observe, with pleasure, that Mr. Maturin has put his genius under better regulation than in his former publications, and retrenched that luxuriance of language, and too copious use of ornament, which distinguishes the authors and orators of Ireland, whose exuberance of imagination sometimes places them in

* ["I take some credit to myself," says Lord Byron, "for having done my best to bring out *Bertram*. Walter Scott was the first who mentioned Maturin, which he did to me with great recommendation in 1815. Maturin sent his *Bertram*, and a letter *without* his address, so that at first I could give him no answer. When I at last hit upon his residence, I sent him a favourable answer, and something more substantial." *Bertram* was successful. But Mr. Maturin's second dramatic attempt proved a failure. Lord Byron terms *Manuel* "the absurd work of a clever man," and, "with the exception of a few capers, as heavy a nightmare as ever bestrode indigestion."

the predicament of their honest countryman, who complained of being run away with by his legs. This excessive indulgence of the imagination is proper to a country where there is more genius than taste, and more copiousness than refinement of ideas. But it is an error to suffer the weeds to rush up with the grain, though their appearance may prove the richness of the soil. There is a time when an author should refrain, like Job, "even from good words—though it should be pain to him."—And although we think Mr. Maturin has reformed that error indifferently well, in his present work, we do pray him, in his future compositions, to reform it altogether. For the rest, we dismiss him with our best wishes, and not without hopes that we may again meet him in the maze of fiction, since, although he has threatened, like Prospero, to break his wand, we have done our poor endeavour to save his book from being burned.

MISS AUSTEN'S NOVELS.*

[Quarterly Review, January, 1821.]

THE times seem to be past when an apology was requisite from reviewers for condescending to notice a novel; when they felt themselves bound in dignity to deprecate the suspicion of paying much regard to trifles, and pleaded the necessity of occasionally stooping to humour the taste of their fair readers. The delights of fiction, if not more keenly or more generally relished, are at least more readily acknowledged by men of sense and taste; and we have lived to hear the merits of the best of this class of writings earnestly discussed by some of the ablest scholars and soundest reasoners of the present day.

We are inclined to attribute this change, not so much to an alteration in the public taste, as in the character of the productions in question. Novels may not, perhaps, display more genius now than formerly, but they contain more solid sense; they may not afford higher gratification, but it is of a nature which men are less disposed to be ashamed of avowing. We remarked, in a former number, in reviewing a work of the author now before us, that "a new style of novel has arisen, within the last fifteen or twenty years, differing from the former in the points upon which the interest hinges; neither alarming our credulity nor amusing our imagination by wild variety of incident, or by those pictures of romantic affection and sensibility, which were formerly as certain attributes of fictitious characters as they are of rare occurrence among those who actually live and die. The substitute

* *Northanger Abbey, and Persuasion.* By Miss AUSTEN.† 4 vols.

† [Author of *Sense and Sensibility; Pride and Prejudice; Mansfield Park;* and *Emma.*]

for these excitements, which had lost much of their poignancy by the repeated and injudicious use of them, was the art of copying from nature as she really exists in the common walks of life, and presenting to the reader, instead of the splendid scenes of an imaginary world, a correct and striking representation of that which is daily taking place around him."

Now, though the origin of this new school of fiction may probably be traced, as we there suggested, to the exhaustion of the mines from which materials for entertainment had been hitherto extracted, and the necessity of gratifying the natural craving of the reader for variety, by striking into an untrodden path; the consequences resulting from this change have been far greater than the mere supply of this demand. When this Flemish painting, as it were, is introduced—this accurate and unexaggerated delineation of events and characters—it necessarily follows, that a novel, which makes good its pretensions, of giving a perfectly correct picture of common life, becomes a far more *instructive* work than one of equal or superior merit of the other class; it guides the judgment, and supplies a kind of artificial experience. It is a remark of the great father of criticism, that poetry (*i. e.* narrative, and dramatic poetry) is of a more philosophical character than history; inasmuch as the latter details what has actually happened, of which many parts may chance to be exceptions to the general rules of probability, and consequently illustrate no general principles; whereas the former shows us what must naturally, or would probably, happen under given circumstances; and thus displays to us a comprehensive view of human nature, and furnishes general rules of practical wisdom. It is evident that this will apply only to such fictions as are quite *perfect* in respect of the probability of their story; and that he, therefore, who resorts to the fabulist rather than the historian, for instruction in human character and conduct, must throw himself entirely on the judgment and skill of his teacher, and give him credit for talents much more rare than the accuracy and veracity which are the chief requisites in history. We fear, therefore, that the exultation which we can conceive some of our gentle readers to feel, at having Aristotle's warrant for (what probably they had never dreamed of) the *philosophical character* of their studies, must, in practice, be

somewhat qualified, by those sundry little violations of probability which are to be met with in most novels; and which so far lower their value, as models of real life, that a person who had no other preparation for the world than is afforded by them, would form, probably, a less accurate idea of things as they are, than he would of a lion from studying merely the representations on China tea-pots.

Accordingly, a heavy complaint has long lain against works of fiction, as giving a false picture of what they profess to imitate, and disqualifying their readers for the ordinary scenes and every-day duties of life. And this charge applies, we apprehend, to the generality of what are strictly called novels, with even more justice than to romances. When all the characters and events are very far removed from what we see around us—when, perhaps, even supernatural agents are introduced, the reader may indulge, indeed, in occasional day-dreams, but will be so little reminded of what he has been reading, by anything that occurs in actual life, that though he may perhaps feel some disrelish for the tameness of the scene before him, compared with the fairy land he has been visiting, yet, at least, his judgment will not be depraved, nor his expectations misled; he will not apprehend a meeting with Algerine banditti on English shores, nor regard the old woman who shows him about an antique country seat, as either an enchantress or the keeper of an imprisoned damsel. But it is otherwise with those fictions which differ from common life in little or nothing but the improbability of the occurrences: the reader is insensibly led to calculate upon some of those lucky incidents and opportune coincidences, of which he has been so much accustomed to read, and which, it is undeniable, *may* take place in real life; and to feel a sort of confidence, that however romantic his conduct may be, and in whatever difficulties it may involve him, all will be sure to come right at last, as is invariably the case with the hero of a novel.

On the other hand, so far as these pernicious effects fail to be produced, so far does the example lose its influence, and the exercise of poetical justice is rendered vain. The reward of virtuous conduct being brought about by fortunate accidents, he who abstains (taught perhaps by bitter disappointments) from reckoning on such accidents, wants that

encouragement to virtue, which alone has been held out to him. "If I were *a man in a novel*," we remember to have heard an ingenious friend observe, "I should certainly act so and so, because I should be sure of being no loser by the most heroic self-devotion, and of ultimately succeeding in the most daring enterprises."

It may be said, in answer, that these objections apply only to the *unskilful* novelist, who, from ignorance of the world, gives an unnatural representation of what he professes to delineate. This is partly true, and partly not; for there is a distinction to be made between the *unnatural* and the merely *improbable:* a fiction is unnatural when there is some assignable reason against the events taking place as described,—when men are represented as acting contrary to the character assigned them, or to human nature in general; as when a young lady of seventeen, brought up in ease, luxury, and retirement, with no companions but the narrow minded and illiterate, displays (as a heroine usually does), under the most trying circumstances, such wisdom, fortitude, and knowledge of the world, as the best instructors and the best examples can rarely produce without the aid of more mature age and longer experience.—On the other hand, a fiction is still *improbable*, though not *unnatural*, when there is no reason to be assigned why things should not take place as represented, except that the *overbalance of chances is* against it; the hero meets, in his utmost distress, most opportunely, with the very person to whom he had formerly done a signal service, and who happens to communicate to him a piece of intelligence which sets all to rights. Why should he not meet him as well as any one else? all that can be said is, that there is no reason why he should. The infant who is saved from a wreck, and who afterwards becomes such a constellation of virtues and accomplishments, turns out to be no other than the nephew of the very gentleman, on whose estate the waves had cast him, and whose lovely daughter he had so long sighed for in vain: there is no reason to be given, except from the calculation of chances, why he should not have been thrown on one part of the coast as well as another. Nay, it would be nothing unnatural, though the most determined novel-reader would be shocked at its improbability, if all the hero's enemies, while they were conspiring his ruin, were to be

struck dead together by a lucky flash of lightning: yet many *dénouements* which *are* decidedly unnatural, are better tolerated than this would be. We shall, perhaps, best explain our meaning by examples, taken from a novel of great merit in many respects. When Lord Glenthorn, in whom a most unfavourable education has acted on a most unfavourable disposition, after a life of torpor, broken only by short sallies of forced exertion, on a sudden reverse of fortune, displays at once the most persevering diligence in the most repulsive studies, and in middle life, without any previous habits of exertion, any hope of early business, or the example of friends, or the stimulus of actual want, to urge him, outstrips every competitor, though every competitor has every advantage against him; this is unnatural.—When Lord Glenthorn, the instant he is stripped of his estates, meets, falls in love with, and is conditionally accepted by the very lady who is remotely entitled to those estates; when, the instant he has fulfilled the conditions of their marriage, the family of the person possessed of the estates becomes extinct, and by the concurrence of circumstances, against every one of which the chances were enormous, the hero is reinstated in all his old domains; this is merely improbable. The distinction which we have been pointing out may be plainly perceived in the events of real life; when anything takes place of such a nature as we should call, in a fiction, merely improbable, because there are many chances against it, we call it a lucky or unlucky accident, a singular coincidence, something very extraordinary, odd, curious, &c.; whereas anything which, in a fiction, would be called unnatural, when it actually occurs (and such things do occur), is still called unnatural, inexplicable, unaccountable, inconceivable, &c., epithets which are not applied to events that have merely the balance of chances against them.

Now, though an author who understands human nature is not likely to introduce into his fictions anything that is unnatural, he will often have much that is improbable: he may place his personages, by the intervention of accident, in striking situations, and lead them through a course of extraordinary adventures; and yet, in the midst of all this, he will keep up the most perfect consistency of character, and make them act as it would be natural for men to act in such situations and circumstances. Fielding's novels are a good

illustration of this: they display great knowledge of mankind; the characters are well preserved; the persons introduced all act as one would naturally expect they should, in the circumstances in which they are placed; but these circumstances are such as it is incalculably improbable should ever exist: several of the events, taken singly, are much against the chances of probability; but the combination of the whole in a connected series, is next to impossible. Even the romances which admit a mixture of supernatural agency, are not more unfit to prepare men for real life, than such novels as these; since one might just as reasonably calculate on the intervention of a fairy, as on the train of lucky chances which combine first to involve Tom Jones in his difficulties, and afterwards to extricate him. Perhaps, indeed, the supernatural fable is of the two not only (as we before remarked) the less mischievous in its moral effects, but also the more correct kind of composition in point of taste: the author lays down a kind of hypothesis of the existence of ghosts, witches, or fairies, and professes to describe what would take place under that hypothesis; the novelist, on the contrary, makes no demand of extraordinary machinery, but professes to describe what may actually take place, according to the existing laws of human affairs: if he therefore present us with a series of events quite unlike any which ever do take place, we have reason to complain that he has not made good his professions.

When, therefore, the generality, even of the most approved novels, were of this character (to say nothing of the heavier charges brought, of inflaming the passions of young persons by warm descriptions, weakening their abhorrence of profligacy, by exhibiting it in combination with the most engaging qualities, and presenting vice in all its allurements, while setting forth the triumphs of "virtue rewarded"), it is not to be wondered that the grave guardians of youth should have generally stigmatized the whole class, as "serving only to fill young people's heads with romantic love-stories, and rendering them unfit to mind anything else." That this censure and caution should in many instances be indiscriminate, can surprise no one, who recollects how rare a quality discrimination is; and how much better it suits indolence, as well as ignorance, to lay down a rule, than to ascertain the exceptions to it: we are acquainted with a careful mother whose

daughters, while they never in their lives read a *novel* of any kind, are permitted to peruse, without reserve, any *plays* that happen to fall in their way; and with another, from whom no lessons, however excellent, of wisdom and piety, contained in a *prose-fiction*, can obtain quarter; but who, on the other hand, is no less indiscriminately indulgent to her children in the article of tales in *verse*, of whatever character.

The change, however, which we have already noticed, as having taken place in the character of several modern novels, has operated in a considerable degree to do away this prejudice; and has elevated this species of composition, in some respects at least, into a much higher class. For most of that instruction which used to be presented to the world in the shape of formal dissertations, or shorter and more desultory moral essays, such as those of the *Spectator* and *Rambler*, we may now resort to the pages of the acute and judicious, but not less amusing novelists who have lately appeared. If their views of men and manners are no less just than those of the essayists who preceded them, are they to be rated lower, because they present to us these views, not in the language of general description, but in the form of well-constructed fictitious narrative? If the practical lessons they inculcate, are no less sound and useful, it is surely no diminution of their merit that they are conveyed by example instead of precept; nor, if their remarks are neither less wise nor less important, are they the less valuable for being represented as thrown out in the course of conversations suggested by the circumstances of the speakers, and perfectly in character. The praise and blame of the moralist are surely not the less effectual for being bestowed, not in general declamation, on classes of men, but on individuals representing those classes, who are so clearly delineated and brought into action before us, that we seem to be acquainted with them, and feel an interest in their fate.

Biography is allowed, on all hands, to be one of the most attractive and profitable kinds of reading: now such novels as we have been speaking of, being a kind of fictitious biography, bear the same relation to the real, that epic and tragic poetry, according to Aristotle, bear to history; they present us (supposing, of course, each perfect in its kind) with the general, instead of the particular—the probable

instead of the true; and by leaving out those accidental irregularities, and exceptions to general rules, which constitute the many improbabilities of real narrative, present us with a clear and *abstracted* view of the general rules themselves; and thus concentrate, as it were, into a small compass, the net result of wide experience.

Among the authors of this school there is no one superior, if equal, to the lady whose last production is now before us, and whom we have much regret in finally taking leave of: her death (in the prime of life, considered as a writer) being announced in this the first publication to which her name is prefixed.* We regret the failure not only of a source of innocent amusement, but also of that supply of practical good sense and instructive example, which she would probably have continued to furnish better than any of her contemporaries:—Miss Edgeworth, indeed, draws characters and details conversations, such as they occur in real life, with a spirit and fidelity not to be surpassed; but her stories are most romantically improbable (in the sense above explained), almost all the important events of them being brought about by most *providential* coincidences; and this, as we have already remarked, is not merely faulty, inasmuch as it evinces a want of skill in the writer, and gives an air of clumsiness to the fiction, but is a very considerable drawback on its practical utility; the personages either of fiction or history being then only profitable examples, when their good or ill conduct meets its appropriate reward, not from a sort of independent machinery of accidents, but as a necessary or probable result, according to the ordinary course of affairs. Miss Edgeworth also is somewhat too avowedly didactic: that seems to be true of her, which the French critics, in the extravagance of their conceits, attributed to Homer and Virgil; viz: that they first thought of a moral, and then framed a fable to illustrate it; she would, we think,

* [Miss Jane Austen was born in 1775, at Steventon, in Hantz, of which parish her father was rector upwards of forty years. On his death, she removed with her mother and sister for a short time to Southampton, and finally, in 1809, to the pleasant village of Chawton, in the same county; from which place this amiable and accomplished lady sent her novels into the world. In May, 1817, symptoms of a deep decay induced her removal to Winchester, for the benefit of constant medical aid. She died there in July following, in her forty-second year.]

instruct more successfully, and she would, we are sure, please more frequently, if she kept the design of teaching more out of sight, and did not so glaringly press every circumstance of her story, principal or subordinate, into the service of a principle to be inculcated, or information to be given. A certain portion of moral instruction must accompany every well-invented narrative. Virtue must be represented as producing, at the long run, happiness; and vice, misery; and the accidental events, that in real life interrupt this tendency, are anomalies which, though true individually, are as false generally as the accidental deformities which vary the average outline of the human figure. They would be as much out of place in a fictitious narrative, as a wen in an academic model. But any *direct* attempt at moral teaching, and any attempt whatever to give scientific information, will, we fear, unless managed with the utmost discretion, interfere with what, after all, is the immediate and peculiar object of the novelist, as of the poet, *to please.* If instruction do not join as a volunteer, she will do no good service. Miss Edgeworth's novels put us in mind of those clocks and watches which are condemned "a double or a treble debt to pay;" which, besides their legitimate object, to show the hour, tell you the day of the month or the week, give you a landscape for a dial-plate, with the second hand forming the sails of a windmill, or have a barrel to play a tune, or an alarum to remind you of an engagement: all very good things in their way; but so it is that these watches never tell the time so well as those in which that is the exclusive object of the maker. Every additional movement is an obstacle to the original design. We do not deny that we have learned much physic, and much law, from *Patronage*, particularly the latter, for Miss Edgeworth's law is of a very original kind; but it was not to learn law and physic that we took up the book, and we suspect we should have been more pleased if we had been less taught. With regard to the influence of religion, which is scarcely, if at all, alluded to in Miss Edgeworth's novels, we would abstain from pronouncing any decision which should apply to her personally. She may, for aught we know, entertain opinions which would not permit her, with consistency, to attribute more to it than she has done; in that case she stands acquitted, *in foro conscientiæ*, of wilfully suppressing anything which she acknow-

ledges to be true and important; but, as a writer, it must still be considered as a blemish, in the eyes at least of those who think differently, that virtue should be studiously inculcated with scarcely any reference to what they regard as the main spring of it; that vice should be traced to every other source except the want of religious principle; that the most radical change from worthlessness to excellence should be represented as wholly independent of that agent which they consider as the only one that can accomplish it; and that consolation under affliction should be represented as derived from every source except the one which they look to as the only true and sure one: "is it not because there is not a God in Israel that ye have sent to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron?"

Miss Austen has the merit (in our judgment most essential) of being evidently a Christian writer: a merit which is much enhanced, both on the score of good taste, and of practical utility, by her religion being not at all obtrusive. She might defy the most fastidious critic to call any of her novels (as *Cœlebs* was designated, we will not say altogether without reason), a "dramatic sermon." The subject is rather alluded to, and that incidentally, than studiously brought forward and dwelt upon. In fact she is more sparing of it than would be thought desirable by some persons; perhaps even by herself, had she consulted merely her own sentiments; but she probably introduced it as far as she thought would be generally acceptable and profitable; for when the purpose of inculcating a religious principle is made too palpably prominent, many readers, if they do not throw aside the book with disgust, are apt to fortify themselves with that respectful kind of apathy with which they undergo a regular sermon, and prepare themselves as they do to swallow a dose of medicine, endeavouring to *get it down* in large gulps, without tasting it more than is necessary.

The moral lessons also of this lady's novels, though clearly and impressively conveyed, are not offensively put forward, but spring incidentally from the circumstances of the story; they are not forced upon the reader, but he is left to collect them (though without any difficulty) for himself; hers is that unpretending kind of instruction which is furnished by real life; and certainly no author has ever conformed more closely to real life, as well in the incidents, as

in the characters and descriptions. Her fables appear to us to be, in their own way, nearly faultless; they do not consist (like those of some of the writers who have attempted this kind of common-life novel writing) of a string of unconnected events which have little or no bearing on one main plot, and are introduced evidently for the sole purpose of bringing in characters and conversations; but have all that compactness of plan and unity of action which is generally produced by a sacrifice of probability: yet they have little or nothing that is not probable; the story proceeds without the aid of extraordinary accidents; the events which take place are the necessary or natural consequences of what has preceded; and yet (which is a very rare merit indeed) the final catastrophe is scarcely ever clearly foreseen from the beginning, and very often comes, upon the generality of readers at least, quite unexpected. We know not whether Miss Austen ever had access to the precepts of Aristotle; but there are few, if any, writers of fiction who have illustrated them more successfully.

The vivid distinctness of description, the minute fidelity of detail, and air of unstudied ease in the scenes represented, which are no less necessary than probability of incident, to carry the reader's imagination along with the story, and give fiction the perfect appearance of reality, she possesses in a high degree; and the object is accomplished without resorting to those deviations from the ordinary plan of narrative in the third person, which have been patronized by some eminent masters. We allude to the two other methods of conducting a fictitious story, viz. either by narrative in the first person, when the hero is made to tell his own tale, or by a series of letters; both of which we conceive have been adopted with a view of heightening the resemblance of the fiction to reality. At first sight, indeed, there might appear no reason why a story told in the first person should have more the air of a real history than in the third; especially as the majority of real histories actually are in the third person; nevertheless, experience seems to show that such is the case; provided there be no want of skill in the writer, the resemblance to real life, of a fiction thus conducted, will approach much the nearest (other points being equal) to a deception, and the interest felt in it, to that which we feel in real transactions. We need only

instance Defoe's novels, which, in spite of much improbability we believe have been oftener mistaken for true narratives, than any fictions that ever were composed. Colonel Newport is well known to have been cited as an historical authority; and we have ourselves found great difficulty in convincing many of our friends that Defoe was not himself the citizen who relates the plague of London. The reason probably is, that in the ordinary form of narrative, the writer is not content to exhibit, like a real historian, a bare detail of such circumstances as might actually have come under his knowledge; but presents us with a description of what is passing in the minds of the parties, and gives an account of their feelings and motives, as well as their most private conversations in various places at once. All this is very amusing, but perfectly unnatural; the merest simpleton could hardly mistake a fiction of *this* kind for a true history, unless he believed the writer to be endued with omniscience and omnipresence, or to be aided by familiar spirits, doing the office of Homer's Muses, whom he invokes to tell him all that could not otherwise be known:—

Υμεις γαρ θεοι εστε, παρεστε τε, ιστε τε παντα.

Let the events, therefore, which are detailed, and the characters described, be ever so natural, the way in which they are presented to us is of a kind of supernatural cast, perfectly unlike any real history that ever was or can be written, and thus requiring a greater stretch of imagination in the reader. On the other hand, the supposed narrator of his own history never pretends to dive into the thoughts and feelings of the other parties; he merely describes his own, and gives his conjectures as to the rest, just as a real autobiographer might do; and thus an author is enabled to assimilate his fiction to reality, without withholding that delineation of the inward workings of the human heart, which is so much coveted. Nevertheless, novels in the first person have not succeeded so well as to make that mode of writing become very general. It is objected to them, not without reason, that they want a *hero:* the person intended to occupy that post being the narrator himself, who of course cannot so describe his own conduct and character as to make the reader thoroughly acquainted with him; though the attempt frequently produces an offensive appearance of egotism.

The plan of a fictitious correspondence seems calculated in some measure to combine the advantages of the other two; since, by allowing each personage to be the speaker in turn, the feelings of each may be described by himself, and his character and conduct by another. But these novels are apt to become excessively tedious; since, to give the letters the appearance of reality (without which the main object proposed would be defeated), they must contain a very large proportion of matter which has no bearing at all upon the story. There is also generally a sort of awkward disjointed appearance in a novel which proceeds entirely in letters, and holds together, as it were, by continual splicing.

Miss Austen, though she has in a few places introduced letters with great effect, has on the whole conducted her novels on the ordinary plan, describing, without scruple, private conversations and uncommunicated feelings: but she has not been forgetful of the important maxim, so long ago illustrated by Homer, and afterwards enforced by Aristotle,* of saying as little as possible in her own person, and giving a dramatic air to the narrative, by introducing frequent conversations, which she conducts with a regard to character hardly exceeded even by Shakspeare himself. Like him, she shows as admirable a discrimination in the characters of fools as of people of sense; a merit which is far from common. To invent, indeed, a conversation full of wisdom or of wit, requires that the writer should himself possess ability; but the converse does not hold good: it is no fool that can describe fools well; and many who have succeeded pretty well in painting superior characters, have failed in giving individuality to those weaker ones, which it is necessary to introduce in order to give a faithful representation of real life: they exhibit to us mere folly in the abstract, forgetting that to the eye of a skilful naturalist the insects on a leaf present as wide differences as exist between the elephant and the lion. Slender, and Shallow, and Aguecheek, as Shakspeare has painted them, though equally fools, resemble one another no more than Richard, and Macbeth, and Julius Cæsar; and Miss Austen's Mrs. Bennet, Mr. Rushworth, and Miss Bates, are no more alike than her Darcy, Knightley, and Edmund Bertram. Some have complained,

* ουδεν αηθες.—Arist. Poet.

indeed, of finding her fools too much like nature, and consequently tiresome; there is no disputing about tastes; all we can say is, that such critics must (whatever difference they may outwardly pay to received opinions) find the *Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Twelfth Night* very tiresome; and that those who look with pleasure at Wilkie's pictures, or those of the Dutch school, must admit that excellence of imitation may confer attraction on that which would be insipid or disagreeable in the reality.

Her minuteness of detail has also been found fault with; but where it produces, at the time, a degree of tediousness, we know not whether that can justly be reckoned a blemish, which is absolutely essential to a very high excellence. Now, it is absolutely impossible, without this, to produce that thorough acquaintance with the characters, which is necessary to make the reader heartily interested in them. Let any one cut out from the *Iliad*, or from Shakspeare's plays, everything (we are far from saying that either might not lose some parts with advantage, but let him reject everything) which is absolutely devoid of importance and of interest *in itself;* and he will find that what is left will have lost more than half its charms. We are convinced that some writers have diminished the effect of their works by being scrupulous to admit nothing into them which had not some absolute, intrinsic, and independent merit. They have acted like those who strip off the leaves of a fruit tree, as being of themselves good for nothing, with the view of securing more nourishment to the fruit, which in fact cannot attain its full maturity and flavour without them.

Mansfield Park contains some of Miss Austen's best moral lessons, as well as her most humorous descriptions. The following specimen unites both: it is a sketch of the mode of education adopted for the two Miss Bertrams, by their aunt Norris, whose father, Sir Thomas, has just admitted into his family a poor niece, Fanny Price (the heroine), a little younger, and much less accomplished than his daughters.

"'Dear mamma, only think, my cousin cannot put the map of Europe together—or my cousin cannot tell the principal rivers in Russia—or she never heard of Asia Minor—or she does not know the difference between water colours and crayons!—How strange!—Did you ever hear anything so stupid?'

"'My dear,' their considerate aunt would reply, 'it is very bad,

but you must not expect everybody to be as forward and quick at learning as yourself.'

"'But, aunt, she is really so very ignorant!—Do you know, we asked her last night, which way she would go to get to Ireland; and she said she should cross to the isle of Wight. She thinks of nothing but the isle of Wight, and she calls it *the Island*, as if there were no other island in the world. I am sure I should have been ashamed of myself, if I had not known better long before I was so old as she is. I cannot remember the time when I did not know a great deal that she has not the least notion of yet. How long ago it is, aunt, since we used to repeat the chronological order of the kings of England, with the dates of their accession, and most of the principal events of their reigns!'

"'Yes,' added the other, 'and of the Roman emperors as low as Severus; besides a great deal of the Heathen Mythology, and all the metals, semi-metals, planets, and distinguished philosophers.'

"'Very true, indeed, my dears, but you are blessed with wonderful memories, and your poor cousin has probably none at all. There is a vast deal of difference in memories, as well as in everything else, and therefore you must make allowance for your cousin, and pity her deficiency. And remember that, if you are ever so forward and clever yourselves, you should always be modest; for, much as you know already, there is a great deal more for you to learn.'

"'Yes, I know there is, till I am seventeen. But I must tell you another thing of Fanny, so odd and so stupid. Do you know, she says she does not want to learn either music or drawing?'

"'To be sure, my dear, that is very stupid indeed, and shows a great want of genius and emulation. But all things considered, I do not know whether it is not as well that it should be so, for, though you know (owing to me) your papa and mamma are so good as to bring her up with you, it is not at all necessary that she should be as accomplished as you are;—on the contrary, it is much more desirable that there should be a difference.'"—P. 33.

The character of Sir Thomas is admirably drawn; one of those men who always judge rightly, and act wisely, when a case is fairly put before them; but who are quite destitute of acuteness of discernment and adroitness of conduct. The Miss Bertrams, without any peculiarly bad natural disposition, and merely with that selfishness, self-importance, and want of moral training, which are the natural result of their education, are conducted by a train of probable circumstances, to a catastrophe which involves their father in the deepest affliction. It is melancholy to reflect how many young ladies in the same sphere, with what is ordinarily called every advantage in point of education, are so precisely in the same situation, that if they avoid a similar fate, it must be rather from good luck than anything else. The

care that is taken to keep from them everything in the shape of affliction, prevents their best feelings from being exercised; and the pains bestowed on their accomplishment, raises their idea of their own consequence: the heart becomes hard, and is engrossed by vanity with all its concomitant vices. Mere moral and religious *instruction* are not adequate to correct all this. But it is a shame to give in our own language sentiments which are so much better expressed by Miss Austen.

"Sir Thomas, too, lately became aware how unfavourable to the character of any young people, must be the totally opposite treatment which Maria and Julia had been always experiencing at home, where the excessive indulgence and flattery of their aunt had been continually contrasted with his own severity. He saw how ill he had judged, in expecting to counteract what was wrong in Mrs. Norris, by its reverse in himself; clearly saw that he had but increased the evil, by teaching them so to repress their spirits in his presence, as to make their real disposition unknown to him, and sending them for all their indulgences to a person who had been able to attach them only by the blindness of her affection, and the excess of her praise.

"Here had been grievous mismanagement; but, bad as it was, he gradually grew to feel that it had not been the most direful mistake in his plan of education. Something must have been wanting *within*, or time would have worn away much of its ill effect. He feared that principle, active principle, had been wanting, that they had never been properly taught to govern their inclinations and tempers, by that sense of duty which can alone suffice. They had been instructed theoretically in their religion, but never required to bring it into daily practice. To be distinguished for elegant accomplishments—the authorized object of their youth—could have had no useful influence that way, no moral effect on the mind. He had meant them to be good, but his cares had been directed to the understanding and manners, not the disposition; and of the necessity of self-denial and humility, he feared they had never heard from any lips that could profit them.

"Bitterly did he deplore a deficiency which now he could scarcely comprehend to have been possible. Wretchedly did he feel, that with all the cost and care of an anxious and expensive education, he had brought up his daughters without their understanding their first duties, or his being acquainted with their character and temper."—Vol. iii, pp. 330–332.

Edmund Bertram, the second son, a sensible and worthy young man, is captivated by a Miss Crawford, who, with her brother, is on a visit at the parsonage with her half-sister, Mrs. Grant: the progress of his passion is very happily depicted:

"Miss Crawford's attractions did not lessen. The harp arrived, and rather added to her beauty, wit, and good humour, for she played with the greatest obligingness, with an expression and taste which were peculiarly becoming, and there was something clever to be said at the close of every air. Edmund was at the parsonage every day to be indulged with his favourite instrument; one morning secured an invitation for the next, for the lady could not be unwilling to have a listener, and everything was soon in a fair train.

"A young woman, pretty, lively, with a harp as elegant as herself; and both placed near a window, cut down to the ground, and opening on a little lawn, surrounded by shrubs in the rich foliage of summer, was enough to catch any man's heart. The season, the scene, the air, were all favourable to tenderness and sentiment."—Vol. i, pp. 132, 133.

He is, however, put in doubt as to her character, by the occasional levity of her sentiments, and her aversion to his intended profession, the church, and to a retired life. Both she and her brother are very clever, agreeable, and good-humoured, and not without moral taste (for Miss Austen does not deal in fiends and angels), but brought up without strict principles, and destitute of real self-denying benevolence. The latter falls in love with Fanny Price, whom he had been originally intending to flirt with for his own amusement. She, however, objects to his principles; being not satisfied with religious belief and practice in herself, and careless about them in her husband. In this respect she presents a useful example to a good many modern females, whose apparent regard for religion in themselves, and indifference about it in their partners for life, make one sometimes inclined to think that they hold the opposite extreme to the Turk's opinion, and believe men to have no souls. Her uncle, Sir Thomas, however, who sees nothing of her objection, is displeased at her refusal; and thinking that she may not sufficiently prize the comforts of wealth to which she has been so long accustomed, without the aid of contrast, encourages her paying a visit to her father, a Captain Price, of the marines, settled with a large family at Portsmouth. She goes, accompanied by her favourite brother William, with all the fond recollections, and bright anticipations, of a visit after eight years' absence.

With a candour very rare in a novelist, Miss Austen describes the remedy as producing its effect. After she has spent a month in the noise, privations, and vulgarities of

home, Mr. Crawford pays her a visit of a couple of days; after he was gone,

"Fanny was out of spirits all the rest of the day. Though tolerably secure of not seeing Mr. Crawford again, she could not help being low. It was parting with somebody of the nature of a friend; and though in one light glad to have him gone, it seemed as if she was now deserted by everybody; it was a sort of renewed separation from Mansfield; and she could not think of his returning to town, and being frequently with Mary and Edmund, without feelings so near akin to envy, as made her hate herself for having them.

"Her dejection had no abatement from anything passing around her; a friend or two of her father's, as always happened if he was not with them, spent the long, long evening there; and from six o'clock to half-past nine, there was little intermission of noise or grog. She was very low. The wonderful improvement which she still fancied in Mr. Crawford, was the nearest to administering comfort of anything within the current of her thoughts. Not considering in how different a circle she had been just seeing him, nor how much might be owing to contrast, she was quite persuaded of his being astonishingly more gentle, and regardful of others, than formerly. And if in little things, must it not be so in great? So anxious for her health and comfort, so very feeling as he now expressed himself, and really seemed, might not it be fairly supposed, that he would not much longer persevere in a suit so distressing to her?"—Vol. iii, pp. 224, 225.

Fanny is, however, armed against Mr. Crawford by a stronger feeling than even her disapprobation; by a vehement attachment to Edmund. The silence in which this passion is cherished—the slender hopes and enjoyments by which it is fed—the restlessness and jealousy with which it fills a mind naturally active, contented and unsuspicious—the manner in which it tinges every event and every reflection, are painted with a vividness and a detail of which we can scarcely conceive any one but a female, and we should almost add, a female writing from recollection, capable.

To say the truth, we suspect one of Miss Austen's great merits in our eyes to be, the insight she gives us into the peculiarities of female character. Authoresses can scarcely ever forget the *esprit de corps*—can scarcely ever forget that they *are authoresses*. They seem to feel a sympathetic shudder at exposing naked a female mind. *Elles se peignent en buste*, and leave the mysteries of womanhood to be described by some interloping male, like Richardson or Marivaux, who is turned out before he has seen half the rites, and is forced to spin from his own conjectures the rest.

Now from this fault Miss Austen is free. Her heroines are what one knows women must be, though one can never get them to acknowledge it. As liable to "fall in love first," as anxious to attract the attention of agreeable men, as much taken with a striking manner, or a handsome face, as unequally gifted with constancy and firmness, as liable to have their affections biassed by convenience or fashion, as we, on our part, will admit men to be. As some illustration of what we mean, we refer our readers to the conversation between Miss Crawford and Fanny, vol. iii, p. 102. Fanny's meeting with her father, p. 199, her reflections after reading Edmund's letter, 246, her happiness (good, and heroine though she be) in the midst of the misery of all her friends, when she finds that Edmund has decidedly broken with her rival; feelings, all of them, which, under the influence of strong passion, must alloy the purest mind, but with which scarcely any *authoress* but Miss Austen would have ventured to temper the etherial materials of a heroine.

But we must proceed to the publication of which the title is prefixed to this article. It contains, it seems, the earliest and the latest productions of the author; the first of them having been purchased, we are told, many years back by a bookseller, who, for some reason unexplained, thought proper to alter his mind and withhold it. We do not much applaud his taste; for though it is decidedly inferior to her other works, having less plot, and what there is, less artificially wrought up, and also less exquisite nicety of moral painting; yet the same kind of excellences which characterize the other novels may be perceived in this, in a degree which would have been highly creditable to most other writers of the same school, and which would have entitled the author to considerable praise, had she written nothing better.

We already begin to fear that we have indulged too much in extracts, and we must save some room for *Persuasion*, or we could not resist giving a specimen of John Thorpe, with his horse that *cannot* go less than ten miles an hour, his refusal to drive his sister "because she has such thick ankles," and his sober consumption of five pints of port a-day; altogether the best portrait of a species, which, though almost extinct, cannot yet be quite classed among the Palæotheria,

the Bang-up Oxonian. Miss Thorpe, the jilt of middling life, in her way, quite as good, though she has not the advantage of being the representative of a rare or a diminishing species. We fear few of our readers, however they may admire the *naiveté*, will admit the truth of poor John Morland's postscript, "I can never expect to know such another woman."

The latter of these novels, however, *Persuasion*, which is more strictly to be considered as a posthumous work, possesses that superiority which might be expected from the more mature age at which it was written, and is second, we think, to none of the former ones, if not superior to all. In the humorous delieneation of character it does not abound quite so much as some of the others, though it has great merit evon on that score; but it has more of that tender and yet elevated kind of interest which is aimed at by the generality of novels, and in pursuit of which they seldom fail of running into romantic extravagance: on the whole, it is one of the most elegant fictions of common life we ever remember to have met with.

Sir Walter Elliot, a silly and conceited baronet, has three daughters, the eldest two, unmarried, and the third, Mary, the wife of a neighbouring gentleman, Mr. Charles Musgrove, heir to a considerable fortune, and living in a genteel cottage in the neighbourhood of the Great House which he is hereafter to inherit. The second daughter, Anne, who is the heroine, and the only one of the family possessed of good sense (a quality which Miss Austen is as sparing of in her novels, as we fear her great mistress, Nature, has been in real life,) when on a visit to her sister, is, by that sort of instinct which generally points out to all parties the person on whose judgment and temper they may rely, appealed to in all the little family differences which arise, and which are described with infinite spirit and detail.

The following touch reminds us, in its minute fidelity to nature, of some of the happiest strokes in the subordinate parts of Hogarth's prints: Mr. C. Musgrove has an aunt whom he wishes to treat with becoming attention, but who, from being of a somewhat inferior class in point of family and fashion, is studiously shunned by his wife, who has all the family pride of her father and elder sister: he takes the opportunity of a walk with a large party on a fine day, to

visit this despised relation, but cannot persuade his wife to accompany him; she pleads fatigue, and remains with the rest to await his return; and he walks home with her, not much pleased at the incivility she has shown.

"She (Anne Elliot) joined Charles and Mary, and was tired enough to be very glad of Charles's other arm,—but Charles, though in very good humour with her, was out of temper with his wife. Mary had shown herself disobliging to him, and was now to reap the consequence, which consequence was his dropping her arm almost every moment, to cut off the heads of some nettles in the hedge with his switch; and when Mary began to complain of it, and lament her being ill-used, according to custom, in being on the hedge side, while Anne was never incommoded on the other, he dropped the arms of both to hunt after a weasel which he had a momentary glance of; and they could hardly get him along at all."—Vol. iii, pp. 211, 212.

But the principal interest arises from a combination of events which cannot better be explained than by a part of the prefatory narrative, which forms, in general, an Euripidean prologue to Miss Austen's novels.

"*He* was not Mr. Wentworth, the former curate of Monkford, however suspicious appearances may be, but a Captain Frederick Wentworth, his brother, who being made commander in consequence of the action off St. Domingo, and not immediately employed, had come into Somersetshire in the summer of 1806; and having no parent living, found a home for half a year, at Monkford. He was, at that time, a remarkably fine young man, with a great deal of intelligence, spirit, and brilliancy; and Anne, an extremely pretty girl, with gentleness, modesty, taste, and feeling. Half the sum of attraction, on either side, might have been enough, for he had nothing to do, and she had hardly any body to love; but the encounter of such lavish recommendations could not fail. They were gradually acquainted, and when acquainted, rapidly and deeply in love. It would be difficult to say which had seen highest perfection in the other, or which had been the happiest; she, in receiving his declarations and proposals, or he in having them accepted.

"A short period of exquisite felicity followed, and but a short one. Troubles soon arose. Sir Walter, on being applied to, without actually withholding his consent, or saying it should never be, gave it all the negative of great astonishment, great coldness, great silence, and a professed resolution of doing nothing for his daughter. He thought it a very degrading alliance; and Lady Russell, though with more tempered and pardonable pride, received it as a most unfortunate one.

"Anne Elliot, with all her claims of birth, beauty, and mind, to throw herself away at nineteen; involve herself at nineteen in an engagement with a young man, who had nothing but himself to recommend him, and no hopes of attaining affluence, but in the

chances of a most uncertain profession; and no connections to secure even his further rise in that profession; would be, indeed, a throwing away, which she grieved to think of! Anne Elliot, so young; known to so few, to be snatched off by a stranger without alliance or fortune; or rather sunk by him into a state of most wearing, anxious, youth-killing dependence! It must not be, if by any fair interference of friendship, any representations from one who had almost a mother's love, and mother's rights, it could be prevented.

"Captain Wentworth had no fortune. He had been lucky in his profession, but spending freely what had come freely, had realized nothing. But, he was confident that he should soon be rich; full of life and ardour, he knew that he should soon have a ship, and soon be on a station that would lead to everything he wanted. He had always been lucky; he knew he should be so still. Such confidence, powerful in its own warmth, and bewitching in the wit which often expressed it, must have been enough for Anne; but Lady Russell saw it very differently. His sanguine temper, and fearlessness of mind, operated very differently on her. She saw in it but an aggravation of the evil. It only added a dangerous character to himself. He was brilliant, he was headstrong. Lady Russell had little taste for wit; and of anything approaching to imprudence a horror. She deprecated the connection in every light.

"Such opposition, as these feelings produced, was more than Anne could combat. Young and gentle as she was, it might yet have been possible to withstand her father's ill-will, though unsoftened by one kind word or look on the part of her sister; but Lady Russell, whom she had always loved and relied on, could not, with such steadiness of opinion, and such tenderness of manner, be continually advising her in vain. She was persuaded to believe the engagement a wrong thing—indiscreet, improper, hardly capable of success, and not deserving it. But it was not a merely selfish caution, under which she acted, in putting an end to it. Had she not imagined herself consulting his good, even more than her own, she could hardly have given him up. The belief of being prudent and self-denying, principally for *his* advantage, was her chief consolation, under the misery of a parting—a final parting; and every consolation was required, for she had to encounter all the additional pain of opinions, on his side, totally unconvinced and unbending, and of his feeling himself ill-used by so forced a relinquishment. He had left the country in consequence.

"A few months had seen the beginning and the end of their acquaintance; but not with a few months ended Anne's share of suffering from it. Her attachment and regrets had, for a long time, clouded every enjoyment of youth; and an early loss of bloom and spirits had been their lasting effect.

"More than seven years were gone since this little history of sorrowful interest had reached its close; and time had softened down much, perhaps nearly all of peculiar attachment to him,—but she had been too dependent on time alone; no aid had been given in change of place (except in one visit to Bath soon after

the rupture), or in any novelty or enlargement of society. No one had ever come within the Kellynch circle, who could bear a comparison with Frederick Wentworth, as he stood in her memory. No second attachment, the only thoroughly natural, happy, and sufficient cure, at her time of life, had been possible to the nice tone of her mind, the fastidiousness of her taste, in the small limits of the society around them. She had been solicited, when about two-and-twenty, to change her name, by the young man, who not long afterwards found a more willing mind in her younger sister; and Lady Russell had lamented her refusal; for Charles Musgrove was the eldest son of a man, whose landed property and general importance was second, in that country, only to Sir Walter's, and of good character and appearance; and however Lady Russell might have asked yet for something more, while Anne was nineteen, she would have rejoiced to see her at twenty-two, so respectably removed from the partialities and injustice of her father's house, and settled so permanently near herself. But in this case, Anne had left nothing for advice to do; and though Lady Russell, as satisfied as ever with her own discretion, never wished the past undone, she began now to have the anxiety, which borders on hopelessness, for Anne's being tempted, by some man of talents and independence, to enter a state for which she held her to be peculiarly fitted by her warm affections and domestic habits.

"They knew not each other's opinion, either its constancy or its change, on the one leading point of Anne's conduct, for the subject was never alluded to,—but Anne, at seven-and-twenty, thought very differently from what she had been made to think at nineteen.—She did not blame Lady Russell, she did not blame herself for having been guided by her; but she felt that were any young person, in similar circumstances, to apply to her for counsel, they would never receive any of such certain immediate wretchedness, such uncertain future good.—She was persuaded that, under every disadvantage of disapprobation at home, and every anxiety attending his profession, all their probable fears, delays, and disappointments, she should yet have been a happier woman in maintaining the engagement, than she had been in the sacrifice of it; and this, she fully believed, had the usual share, had even more than a usual share of all such solicitudes and suspense between theirs, without reference to the actual results of their case, which, as it happened, would have bestowed earlier prosperity than could be reasonably calculated on. All his sanguine expectations, all his confidence could have been justified. His genius and ardour had seemed to foresee and to command his prosperous path. He had, very soon after their engagement ceased, got employ; and all that he had told her would follow, had taken place. He had distinguished himself, and early gained the other step in rank—and must now, by successive captures, have made a handsome fortune. She had only navy lists and newspapers for her authority, but she could not doubt his being rich:—and, in favour of his constancy, she had no reason to believe him married.

"How eloquent could Anne Elliot have been,—how eloquent, at least, were her wishes, on the side of early warm attachment, and

a cheerful confidence in futurity, against that over-anxious caution which seems to insult exertion and distrust Providence!—She had been forced into prudence in her youth, she learned romance as she grew older—the natural sequel of an unnatural beginning."—Vol. iii, pp. 57-67.

After an absence of eight years, he returns to her neighbourhood, and circumstances throw them frequently in contact. Nothing can be more exquisitely painted than her feelings on such occasions. First, dread of the meeting,—then, as that is removed by custom, renewed regret for the happiness she has thrown away, and the constantly recurring contrast, though known only to herself, between the distance of their intercourse and her involuntary sympathy with all his feelings, and instant comprehension of all his thoughts, of the meaning of every glance of his eye, and curl of his lip, and intonation of his voice. In him her mild good sense and elegance gradually reawake long-forgotten attachment; but with it return the usual accompaniments of undeclared love, distrust of her sentiments towards him, and suspicious of their being favourable to another. In this state of regretful jealousy he overhears, while writing a letter, a conversation she is holding with his friend Captain Harville, respecting another naval friend, Captain Benwick, who had been engaged to the sister of the former, and very speedily after her death had formed a fresh engagement; we cannot refrain from inserting an extract from this conversation, which is exquisitely beautiful.

"'Your feelings may be the strongest,' replied Anne, 'but the same spirit of analogy will authorize me to assert that ours are the most tender. Man is more robust than woman, but he is not longer lived: which exactly explains my view of the nature of their attachments. Nay, it would be too hard upon you, if it were otherwise. You have difficulties, and privations, and dangers enough to struggle with. You are always labouring and toiling, exposed to every risk and hardship. Your home, country, friends, all quitted. Neither time, nor health, nor life, to be called your own. It would be too hard indeed' (with a faltering voice) 'if woman's feelings were to be added to all this.'

"'We shall never agree upon this question'—Captain Harville was beginning to say, when a slight noise called their attention to Captain Wentworth's hitherto perfectly quiet division of the room. It was nothing more than that his pen had fallen down, but Anne was startled at finding him nearer than she had supposed, and half inclined to suspect that the pen had only fallen, because he had been occupied by them, striving to catch sounds, which yet she did not think he could have caught.

"'Have you finished your letter?' said Captain Harville. 'Not quite, a few lines more. I shall have done in five minutes.'

"'There is no hurry on my side. I am only ready whenever you are.—I am in very good anchorage here' (smiling at Anne), 'well supplied, and want for nothing—no hurry for a signal at all. —Well, Miss Elliot' (lowering his voice), 'as I was saying, we shall never agree I suppose upon this point. No man and woman would, probably. But let me observe that all histories are against you, all stories, prose and verse. If I had such a memory as Benwick, I could bring you fifty quotations in a moment on my side the argument, and I do not think I ever opened a book in my life which had not something to say upon woman's inconstancy. Songs and proverbs, all talk of woman's fickleness. But perhaps you will say, these were all written by men.'

"'Perhaps I shall. Yes, yes, if you please, no reference to examples in books. Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands. I will not allow books to prove anything.'

"'But how shall we prove anything?'

"'We never shall. We never can expect to prove anything upon such a point. It is a difference of opinion which does not admit of proof. We each begin probably with a little bias towards our own sex, and upon that bias build every circumstance in favour of it which has occurred within our own circle; many of which circumstances (perhaps those very cases which strike us the most) may be precisely such as cannot be brought forward without bretaying a confidence, or, in some respect, saying what should not be said.'

"'Ah!' cried Captain Harville, in a tone of strong feeling, 'if I could but make you comprehend what a man suffers when he takes a last look at his wife and children, and watches the boat that he has sent them off in, as long as it is in sight, and then turns away and says, 'God knows whether we ever meet again!' And then, if I could convey to you the glow of his soul when he does see them again; when, coming back after a twelvemonth's absence perhaps, and obliged to put into another port, he calculates how soon it will be possible to get them there, pretending to deceive himself, and saying 'They cannot be here till such a day,' but all the while hoping for them twelve hours sooner, and seeing them arrive at last, as if Heaven had given them wings, by many hours sooner still! If I could explain to you all this, and all that a man can bear and do, and glories to do for the sake of these treasures of his existence! I speak, you know, only of such men as have hearts!' pressing his own with emotion.

"'Oh!' cried Anne, eagerly, 'I hope I do justice to all that is felt by you, and by those who resemble you. God forbid that I should undervalue the warm and faithful feelings of any of my fellow-creatures. I should deserve utter contempt if I dared to suppose that true attachment and constancy were known only by woman. No, I believe you capable of everything great and good in your married lives. I believe you equal to every important

exertion, and to every domestic forbearance, so long as—if I may be allowed the expression—so long as you have an object. I mean, while the woman you love lives, and lives for you. All the privilege I claim for my own sex (it is not a very enviable one, you need not covet it) is that of loving longest, when existence or when hope is gone.'

"She could not immediately have uttered another sentence: her heart was too full, her breath too much oppressed."—Vol. iv, pp. 263-269.

While this conversation has been going on, he has been replying to it on paper, under the appearance of finishing his letter: he puts the paper into her hand, and hurries away.

"I can listen no longer in silence. I must speak to you by such means as are within my reach. You pierce my soul. I am half agony, half hope. Tell me not that I am too late, that such precious feelings are gone for ever. I offer myself to you again with a heart even more your own, than when you almost broke it eight years and a half ago. Dare not say that man forgets sooner than woman, that his love has an earlier death. I have loved none but you. Unjust I may have been, weak and resentful I have been, but never inconstant. You alone have brought me to Bath. For you alone I think and plan.—Have you not seen this? Can you fail to have understood my wishes?—I had not waited even these ten days, could I have read your feelings, as I think you must have penetrated mine. I can hardly write. I am every instant hearing something which overpowers me. You sink your voice, but I can distinguish the tones of that voice, when they would be lost on others.—Too good, too excellent creature! You do us justice indeed. You do believe that there is true attachment and constancy among men. Believe it to be most fervent, most undeviating in

"F. W."

We ventured, in a former article, to remonstrate against the dethronement of the once powerful God of Love, in his own most especial domain, the novel; and to suggest that, in shunning the ordinary fault of recommending by examples a romantic and uncalculating extravagance of passion, Miss Austen had rather fallen into the opposite extreme of exclusively patronizing what are called prudent matches, and too much disparaging sentimental enthusiasm. We urge, that, mischievous as is the extreme on this side, it is not the one into which the young folks of the present day are the most likely to run: the prevailing fault is not now, whatever it may have been, to sacrifice all for love:

"Venit enim magnum donandi parca juventus
Nec tantum Veneris quantum studiosa culinæ."

We may now, without retracting our opinion, bestow unqualified approbation; for the distresses of the present heroine all arise from her prudent refusal to listen to the suggestions of her heart. The catastrophe, however, is happy, and we are left in doubt whether it would have been better for her or not to accept the first proposal; and this we conceive is precisely the proper medium; for, though we would not have prudential calculations the sole principle to be regarded in marriage, we are far from advocating their exclusion. To disregard the advice of sober-minded friends on an important point of conduct, is an imprudence we would by no means recommend; indeed, it is a species of selfishness, if, in listening only to the dictates of passion, a man sacrifices to its gratification the happiness of those most dear to him as well as his own; though it is not now-a-days the most prevalent form of selfishness. But it is no condemnation of a sentiment to say, that it becomes blamable when it interferes with duty, and is uncontrolled by conscience: the desire of riches, power, or distinction—the taste for ease and comfort—are to be condemned when they transgress these bounds; and love, if it keep within them, even though it be somewhat tinged with enthusiasm, and a little at variance with what the worldly call prudence, *i. e.* regard for pecuniary advantage, may afford a better moral discipline to the mind than most other passions. It will not at least be denied, that it has often proved a powerful stimulus to exertion where others have failed, and has called forth talents unknown before even to the possessor. What, though the pursuit may be fruitless, and the hopes visionary? The result may be a real and substantial benefit, though of another kind; the vineyard may have been cultivated by digging in it for the treasure which is never to be found. What, though the perfections with which imagination has decorated the beloved object, may, in fact, exist but in a slender degree? still they are believed in and admired as real; if not, the love is such as does not merit the name; and it is proverbially true that men become assimilated to the character (*i. e.* what they *think* the character) of the being they fervently adore: thus, as in the noblest exhibitions of the stage, though that which is contemplated be but a fiction, it may be realized in the mind of the beholder; and, though grasping at a cloud, he may become worthy of possessing a real

goddess. Many a generous sentiment, and many a virtuous resolution, have been called forth and matured by admiration of one, who may herself perhaps have been incapable of either. It matters not what the object is that a man aspires to be worthy of, and proposes as a model for imitation, if he does but *believe* it to be excellent. Moreover, all doubts of success (and they are seldom, if ever, entirely wanting) must either produce or exercise humility; and the endeavour to study another's interest and inclinations, and prefer them to one's own, may promote a habit of general benevolence which may outlast the present occasion. Everything, in short, which tends to abstract a man in any degree, or in any way, from self,—from self-admiration and self-interest, has so far at least, a beneficial influence in forming the character.

On the whole, Miss Austen's works may safely be recommended, not only as among the most unexceptionable of their class, but as combining, in an eminent degree, instruction with amusement, though without the direct effort at the former, of which we have complained, as sometimes defeating its object. For those who cannot, or will not, *learn* anything from productions of this kind, she has provided entertainment which entitles her to thanks; for mere innocent amusement is in itself a good, when it interferes with no greater: especially as it may occupy the place of some other that may *not* be innocent. The Eastern monarch who proclaimed a reward to him who should discover a new pleasure, would have deserved well of mankind had he stipulated that it should be blameless. Those, again, who delight in the study of human nature, may improve in the knowledge of it, and in the profitable application of that knowledge, by the perusal of such fictions as those before us.

REMARKS ON FRANKENSTEIN.*

[Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, March, 1818.]

"Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay
To mould me man? Did I solicit thee
From Darkness to promote me?"——
Paradise Lost.

THIS is a novel, or more properly a romantic fiction, of a nature so peculiar, that we ought to describe the species before attempting any account of the individual production.

The first general division of works of fiction, into such as bound the events they narrate by the actual laws of nature, and such as, passing these limits, are managed by marvellous and supernatural machinery, is sufficiently obvious and decided. But the class of marvellous romances admits of several subdivisions. In the earlier productions of imagination, the poet or tale-teller does not, in his own opinion, transgress the laws of credibility, when he introduces into his narration the witches, goblins, and magicians, in the existence of which he himself, as well as his hearers, is a firm believer. This good faith, however, passes away, and works turning upon the marvellous are written and read merely on account of the exercise which they afford to the imagination of those who, like the poet Collins, love to riot in the luxuriance of Oriental fiction, to rove through the meanders of enchantment; to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, and to repose by the waterfalls of Elysian gardens. In this species of composition, the marvellous is itself the principal and most important object both to the author and reader. To describe its effect upon the mind of the human personages engaged in its wonders, and dragged along by its machinery, is comparatively an inferior object. The hero and heroine, partakers of the supernatural charac-

* *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus.* 3 vols. 12mo.

ter which belongs to their adventures, walk the maze of enchantment with a firm and undaunted step, and appear as much at their ease, amid the wonders around them, as the young fellow described by the *Spectator*, who was discovered taking a snuff with great composure in the midst of a stormy ocean, represented on the stage of the opera.

A more philosophical and refined use of the supernatural in works of fiction, is proper to that class in which the laws of nature are represented as altered, not for the purpose of pampering the imagination with wonders, but in order to show the probable effect which the supposed miracles would produce on those who witnessed them. In this case, the pleasure ordinarily derived from the marvellous incidents is secondary to that which we extract from observing how mortals like ourselves would be affected,

> "By scenes like these which, daring to depart
> From sober truth, are still to nature true."

Even in the description of his marvels, however, the author, who manages this style of composition with address, gives them an indirect importance with the reader, when he is able to describe, with nature and with truth, the effects which they are calculated to produce upon his *dramatis personæ*. It will be remembered, that the sapient Partridge was too wise to be terrified at the mere appearance of the ghost of Hamlet, whom he knew to be a man dressed up in pasteboard armour for the nonce: it was when he saw the "little man," as he called Garrick, so frightened, that a sympathetic horror took hold of him. Of this we shall presently produce some examples from the narrative before us. But success in this point is still subordinate to the author's principal object, which is less to produce an effect by means of the marvels of the narrations, than to open new trains and channels of thought, by placing men in supposed situations of an extraordinary and preternatural character, and then describing the mode of feeling and conduct which they are most likely to adopt.

To make more clear the distinction we have endeavoured to draw between the marvellous and the effects of the marvellous, considered as separate objects, we may briefly invite our readers to compare the common tale of *Tom Thumb* with *Gulliver's Voyage to Brobdingnag;* one of the most childish fictions, with one which is pregnant with wit and

satire, yet both turning upon the same assumed possibility of the existence of a pigmy among a race of giants. In the former case, when the imagination of the story-teller has exhausted itself in every species of hyperbole, in order to describe the diminutive size of his hero, the interest of the tale is at an end; but in the romance of the Dean of St. Patrick's, the exquisite humour with which the natural consequences of so strange and unusual a situation is detailed, has a canvass on which to expand itself, as broad as the luxuriance even of the author's talents could desire. Gulliver stuck into a marrow bone, and Master Thomas Thumb's disastrous fall into the bowl of hasty-pudding, are, in the general outline, kindred incidents; but the jest is exhausted in the latter case, when the accident is told; whereas in the former, it lies not so much in the comparatively pigmy size which subjected Gulliver to such a ludicrous misfortune, as in the tone of grave and dignified feeling with which he resents the disgrace of the incident.

In the class of fictitious narrations to which we allude, the author opens a sort of account-current with the reader; drawing upon him, in the first place, for credit to that degree of the marvellous which he proposes to employ; and becoming virtually bound, in consequence of this indulgence, that his personages shall conduct themselves, in the extraordinary circumstances in which they are placed, according to the rules of probability, and the nature of the human heart. In this view, the *probable* is far from being laid out of sight even amid the wildest freaks of imagination; on the contrary, we grant the extraordinary postulates which the author demands as the foundation of his narrative, only on condition of his deducing the consequences with logical precision.

We have only to add, that this class of fiction has been sometimes applied to the purposes of political satire, and sometimes to the general illustration of the powers and workings of the human mind. Swift, Bergerac, and others, have employed it for the former purpose, and a good illustration of the latter is the well-known *Saint Leon* of William Godwin. In this latter work, assuming the possibility of the transmutation of metals and of the *elixir vitæ*, the author has deduced, in the course of his narrative, the probable consequences of the possession of such secrets upon the fortunes and mind of him who might enjoy them. *Frank-*

enstein is a novel upon the same plan with *Saint Leon;* it is said to be written by Mr. Percy Bysshe Shelley, who, if we are rightly informed, is son-in-law to Mr. Godwin;* and it is inscribed to that ingenious author.

In the preface, the author lays claim to rank his work among the class which we have endeavoured to describe.

"The event on which this fiction is founded has been supposed by Dr. Durwin, and some of the physiological writers of Germany, as not of impossible occurrence. I shall not be supposed as according the remotest degree of serious faith to such an imagination; yet, in assuming it as the basis of a work of fancy, I have not considered myself as merely weaving a series of supernatural terrors. The event, on which the interest of the story depends, is exempt from the disadvantages of a mere tale of spectres or enchantment. It was recommended by the novelty of the situations which it develops; and, however impossible as a physical fact, affords a point of view to the imagination for the delineating of human passions more comprehensive and commanding than any which the ordinary relations of existing events can yield.

"I have thus endeavoured to preserve the truth of the elementary principles of human nature, while I have not scrupled to innovate upon their combinations. The *Iliad*, the tragic poetry of Greece,—Shakspeare, in the *Tempest* and *Midsummer's Night's Dream*,—and most especially Milton, in *Paradise Lost*, conform to this rule; and the most humble novelist, who seeks to confer or receive amusement from his labours, may, without presumption, apply to prose fiction a license, or rather a rule, from the adoption of which so many exquisite combinations of human feeling have resulted in the highest specimens of poetry."

We shall, without farther preface, detail the particulars of the singular story which is thus introduced.

A vessel, engaged in a voyage of discovery to the North Pole, having become embayed among the ice at a very high latitude, the crew, and particularly the captain or owner of the ship, are surprised at perceiving a gigantic form pass at some distance from them, on a car drawn by dogs, in a place where they conceived no mortal could exist. While they were speculating on this singular apparition, a thaw commences, and disengages them from their precarious situation. On the next morning they pick up, upon a floating fragment of the broken ice, a sledge like that they had before seen, with a human being in the act of perishing. He is with difficulty recalled to life, and proves to be a young man of

* [The author of *Frankenstein* is Mrs. Shelley, daughter of Mr. Godwin and Mrs. Mary Woolstonecroft. See her *Preface to the last edition.*]

the most amiable manners and extended acquirements, but attenuated by fatigue, and wrapped in dejection and gloom of the darkest kind. The captain of the ship, a gentleman whose ardent love of science had engaged him on an expedition so dangerous, becomes attached to the stranger, and at length extorts from him the wonderful tale of his misery, which he thus attains the means of preserving from oblivion.

Frankenstein describes himself as a native of Geneva, born and bred up in the bosom of domestic love and affection. His father—his friend Henry Clerval—Elizabeth, an orphan of extreme beauty and talent, bred up in the same house with him, are possessed of all the qualifications which could render him happy as a son, a friend, and a lover. In the course of his studies he becomes acquainted with the works of Cornelius Agrippa, and other authors treating of occult philosophy, on whose venerable tomes modern neglect has scattered no slight portion of dust. Frankenstein remains ignorant of the contempt in which his favourites are held, until he is separated from his family to pursue his studies at the university of Ingolstadt. Here he is introduced to the wonders of modern chemistry, as well as of natural philosophy, in all its branches. Prosecuting these sciences into their innermost and most abstruse recesses, with unusual talent and unexampled success, he at length makes that discovery on which the marvellous part of the work is grounded. His attention had been especially bound to the structure of the human frame and of the principle of life. He engaged in physiological researches of the most recondite and abstruse nature, searching among charnel vaults and in dissection-rooms, and the objects most insupportable to the delicacy of human feelings, in order to trace the minute chain of causation which takes place in the change from life to death, and from death to life. In the midst of this darkness a light broke in upon him.

"'Remember,' says his narrative, 'I am not recording the vision of a madman. The sun does not more certainly shine in the heavens than that which I now affirm is true. Some miracle might have produced it, yet the stages of the discovery were distinct and probable. After days and nights of incredible labour and fatigue, I succeeded in discovering the cause of generation and life; nay, more, I became myself capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter.'"

This wonderful discovery impelled Frankenstein to avail himself of his art, by the creation (if we dare to call it so) or formation of a living and sentient being. As the minuteness of the parts formed a great difficulty, he constructed the figure which he proposed to animate of a gigantic size, that is, about eight feet high, and strong and large in proportion. The feverish anxiety with which the young philosopher toils through the horrors of his secret task, now dabbling among the unhallowed relics of the grave, and now torturing the living animal to animate the lifeless clay, are described generally, but with great vigour of language. Although supported by the hope of producing a new species that should bless him as its creator and source, he nearly sinks under the protracted labour, and loathsome details, of the work he had undertaken; and scarcely is his fatal enthusiasm sufficient to support his nerves, or animate his resolution. The result of this extraordinary discovery it would be unjust to give in any words save those of the author. We shall give it at length, as an excellent specimen of the style and manner of the work.

"It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

"How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful!—Great God!—His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set—his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

"The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room, and continued

a long time traversing my bed-chamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep. At length lassitude succeeded to the tumult I had before endured; and I threw myself on the bed in my clothes, endeavouring to seek a few moments of forgetfulness. But it was in vain; I slept indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her; but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed; when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window-shutters, I beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped and rushed down stairs. I took refuge in the court-yard belonging to the house which I inhabited, where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal corpse to which I had so miserably given life.

"Oh! no mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch. I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then; but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived.

"I passed the night wretchedly. Sometimes my pulse beat so quickly and hardly, that I felt the palpitation of every artery; at others, I nearly sank to the ground, through languor and extreme weakness. Mingled with this horror, I felt the bitterness of disappointment: dreams that had been my food and pleasant rest for so long a space, were now become a hell to me; and the change was so rapid, the overthrow so complete!

"Morning, dismal and wet, at length dawned, and discovered, to my sleepless and aching eyes, the church of Ingolstadt, its white steeple and clock, which indicated the sixth hour. The porter opened the gates of the court, which had that night been my asylum, and I issued into the streets, pacing them with quick steps, as if I sought to avoid the wretch whom I feared every turning of the street would present to my view. I did not dare return to the apartment which I inhabited, but felt impelled to hurry on, although wetted by the rain, which poured from a black and comfortless sky.

"I continued walking in this manner for some time, endeavouring, by bodily exercise, to ease the load that weighed upon my mind. I traversed the streets without any clear conception of where I was or what I was doing. My heart palpitated in the

sickness of fear; and I hurried on with irregular steps, not daring to look about me.

> 'Like one who on a lonely road
> Doth walk in fear and dread,
> And, having once turn'd round, walks on,
> And turns no more his head:
> Because he knows a frightful fiend
> Doth close behind him tread.' "*

He is relieved by the arrival of the diligence from Geneva, out of which jumps his friend Henry Clerval, who had come to spend a season at the college. Compelled to carry Clerval to his lodgings, which, he supposed, must still contain the prodigious and hideous specimen of his Promethean art, his feelings are again admirably described, allowing always for the extraordinary cause supposed to give them birth.

"I trembled excessively; I could not endure to think of, and far less to allude to, the occurrences of the preceding night. I walked with a quick pace, and we soon arrived at my college. I then reflected, and the thought made me shiver, that the creature whom I had left in my apartment might still be there, alive, and walking about. I dreaded to behold this monster; but I feared still more that Henry should see him. Entreating him, therefore, to remain a few minutes at the bottom of the stairs, I darted up towards my own room. My hand was already on the lock of the door before I recollected myself. I then paused; and a cold shivering came over me. I threw the door forcibly open, as children are accustomed to do when they expect a spectre to stand in waiting for them on the other side; but nothing appeared. I stepped fearfully in: the apartment was empty; and my bed-room was also freed from its hideous guest. I could hardly believe that so great a good fortune could have befallen me; but when I became assured that my enemy had indeed fled, I clapped my hands for joy, and ran down to Clerval."

The animated monster is heard of no more for a season. Frankenstein pays the penalty of his rash researches into the *arcana* of human nature, in a long illness, after which the two friends prosecute their studies for two years in uninterrupted quiet; Frankenstein, as may be supposed, abstaining, with a sort of abhorrence, from those in which he had once so greatly delighted. At the lapse of this period, he is made acquainted with a dreadful misfortune which has befallen his family, by the violent death of his youngest brother, an interesting child, who, while straying from his keeper, had been murdered by some villain in the walks of

* Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner."

Plainpalais. The marks of strangling were distinct on the neck of the unfortunate infant, and a gold ornament which it wore, and which was amissing, was supposed to have been the murderer's motive for perpetrating the crime.

At this dismal intelligence, Frankenstein flies to Geneva, and impelled by fraternal affection, visits the spot where this horrid accident had happened. In the midst of a thunder storm, with which the evening had closed, and just as he had attained the fatal spot on which Victor had been murdered, a flash of lightning displays to him the hideous demon to which he had given life, gliding towards a neighbouring precipice. Another flash shows him hanging among the cliffs, up which he scrambles with far more than mortal agility, and is seen no more. The inference, that this being was the murderer of his brother, flashed on Frankenstein's mind as irresistibly as the lightning itself, and he was tempted to consider the creature whom he had cast among mankind to work, it would seem, acts of horror and depravity, nearly in the light of his own vampire, let loose from the grave, and destined to destroy all that was dear to him.

Frankenstein was right in his apprehensions. Justine, the maid to whom the youthful Victor had been intrusted, is found to be in possession of the golden trinket which had been taken from the child's person; and, by a combination of circumstantial evidence, she is concluded to be the murderess, and as such condemned to death, and executed. It does not appear that Frankenstein attempted to avert her fate, by communicating his horrible secret; but, indeed, who would have given him credit, or in what manner could he have supported his tale?

In a solitary expedition to the top of Mount Aveyron, undertaken to dispel the melancholy which clouded his mind, Frankenstein unexpectedly meets with the monster he had animated, who compels him to a conference and a parley. The material demon gives an account, at great length, of his history since his animation, of the mode in which he acquired various points of knowledge, and of the disasters which befell him, when, full of benevolence and philanthropy, he endeavoured to introduce himself into human society. The most material part of his education was acquired in a ruinous pig-sty—a lyceum which this strange student occupied, he assures us, for a good many

months undiscovered, and in constant observance of the motions of an amiable family, from imitating whom, he learns the use of language, and other accomplishments, much more successfully than Caliban, though the latter had a conjuror to his tutor. This detail is not only highly improbable, but it is injudicious, as its unnecessary minuteness tends rather too much to familiarize us with the being whom it regards, and who loses, by this *lengthy* oration, some part of the mysterious sublimity annexed to his first appearance. The result is, this monster, who was at first, according to his own account, but a harmless monster, becomes ferocious and malignant, in consequence of finding all his approaches to human society repelled with injurious violence and offensive marks of disgust. Some papers concealed in his dress, acquainted him with the circumstances and person to whom he owed his origin; and the hate which he felt towards the whole human race was now concentrated in resentment against Frankenstein. In this humour he murdered the child, and disposed the picture so as to induce a belief of Justine's guilt. The last is an inartificial circumstance; this indirect mode of mischief was not likely to occur to the being the narrative presents to us. The conclusion of this strange narrative is, a peremptory demand on the part of the demon, as he is usually termed, that Frankenstein should renew his fearful experiment, and create for him an helpmate hideous as himself, who should have no pretence for shunning his society. On this condition he promises to withdraw to some distant desert, and shun the human race forever. If his creator shall refuse him this consolation, he vows the prosecution of the most frightful vengeance. Frankenstein, after a long pause of reflection, imagines he sees that the justice due to the miserable being, as well as to mankind, who might be exposed to so much misery, from the power and evil dispositions of a creature who could climb perpendicular cliffs, and exist among glaciers, demanded that he should comply with the request; and granted his promise accordingly.

Frankenstein retreats to one of the distant islands of the Orcades, that in secrecy and solitude he might resume his detestable and ill-omened labours, which now were doubly hideous, since he was deprived of the enthusiasm with which he formerly prosecuted them. As he is sitting one night in

his laboratory, and recollecting the consequences of his first essay in the Promethean art, he begins to hesitate concerning the right he had to form another being as malignant and blood-thirsty as that he had unfortunately already animated. It is evident that he would thereby give the demon the means of propagating a hideous race, superior to mankind in strength and hardihood, who might render the very existence of the present human race a condition precarious and full of terror. Just as these reflections lead him to the conclusion that his promise was criminal, and ought not to be kept, he looks up, and sees, by the light of the moon, the demon at the casement.

"A ghastly grin wrinkled his lips as he gazed on me, where I sat fulfilling the task which he allotted to me. Yes, he had followed me in my travels; he had loitered in forests, hid himself in caves, or taken refuge in wide and desert heaths, and he now came to mark my progress, and claim the fulfilment of my promise.

"As I looked on him, his countenance expressed the utmost extent of malice and treachery. I thought with a sensation of madness on my promise of creating another like to him, and, trembling with passion, tore to pieces the thing on which I was engaged. The wretch saw me destroy the creature on whose future existence he depended for happiness, and, with a howl of devilish despair and revenge, withdrew."

At a subsequent interview, described with the same wild energy, all treaty is broken off betwixt Frankenstein and the work of his hands, and they part on terms of open and declared hatred and defiance. Our limits do not allow us to trace in detail the progress of the demon's vengeance; Clerval falls its first victim, and under circumstances which had very nearly conducted the new Prometheus to the gallows as his supposed murderer; Elizabeth, his bride, is next strangled on her wedding-night; his father dies of grief; and at length Frankenstein, driven to despair and distraction, sees nothing left for him in life but vengeance on the singular cause of his misery. With this purpose he pursues the monster from clime to clime, receiving only such intimations of his being on the right scent, as served to show that the demon delighted in thus protracting his fury and his sufferings. At length, after the flight and pursuit had terminated among the frost-fogs and icy islands of the nothern ocean, and just when he had a glimpse of his adversary, the ground sea was heard, the ice gave way, and Frankenstein

was placed in the perilous situation in which he is first introduced to the reader.

Exhausted by his sufferings, but still breathing vengeance against the being which was at once his creature and his persecutor, this unhappy victim to physiological discovery expires, just as the clearing away of the ice permits Captain Walton's vessel to hoist sail for their return to Britain. At midnight, the demon, who had been his destroyer, is discovered in the cabin, lamenting over the corpse of the person who gave him being. To Walton he attempts to justify his resentment towards the human race, while, at the same time, he acknowledges himself a wretch who had murdered the lovely and the helpless, and pursued to irremediable ruin his creator, the select specimen of all that was worthy of love and admiration.

"'Fear not,' he continues, addressing the astonished Walton, 'that I shall be the instrument of future mischief. My work is nearly complete. Neither yours nor any man's death is needed to consummate the series of my being, and accomplish that which must be done; but it requires my own. Do not think that I shall be slow to perform this sacrifice. I shall quit your vessel on the ice-raft which brought me hither, and shall seek the most nothern extremity of the globe; I shall collect my funeral pile, and consume to ashes this miserable frame, that its remains may afford no light to any curious and unhallowed wretch, who would create such another as I have been.'———

"He sprang from the cabin-window, as he said this, upon the ice-raft which lay close to the vessel. He was soon borne away by the waves, and lost in darkness and distance."

Whether this singular being executed his purpose or not, must necessarily remain an uncertainty, unless the voyage of discovery to the north pole should throw any light on the subject.

So concludes this extraordinary tale, in which the author seems to us to disclose uncommon powers of poetic imagination. The feeling with which we perused the unexpected and fearful, yet, allowing the possibility of the event, very natural conclusion of Frankenstein's experiment, shook a little even our firm nerves; although such, and so numerous have been the expedients for exciting terror employed by the romantic writers of the age, that the reader may adopt Macbeth's words with a slight alteration:

"We have supp'd full with horrors;
Direness, familiar to our 'callous' thoughts,
Cannot once startle us."

It is no slight merit in our eyes, that the tale, though wild in incident, is written in plain and forcible English, without exhibiting that mixture of hyperbolical Germanisms with which tales of wonder are usually told, as if it were necessary that the language should be as extravagant as the fiction. The ideas of the author are always clearly as well as forcibly expressed; and his descriptions of landscape have in them the choice requisites of truth, freshness, precision, and beauty. The self-education of the monster, considering the slender opportunities of acquiring knowledge that he possessed, we have already noticed as improbable and overstrained. That he should have not only learned to speak, but to read, and, for aught we know, to write—that he should have become acquainted with *Werter*, with *Plutarch's Lives*, and with *Paradise Lost*, by listening through a hole in a wall, seems as unlikely as that he should have acquired, in the same way, the problems of *Euclid*, or the art of book-keeping by single and double entry. The author has however two apologies—the first, the necessity that his monster should acquire those endowments, and the other, that his neighbours were engaged in teaching the language of the country to a young foreigner. His progress in self-knowledge, and the acquisition of information, is, after all, more wonderful than that of *Hai Eben Yokhdan*, or *Automathes*, or the hero of the little romance called *The Child of Nature*, one of which works might perhaps suggest the train of ideas followed by the author of *Frankenstein*. We should also be disposed, in support of the principles with which we set out, to question whether the monster, how tall, agile, and strong however, could have perpetrated so much mischief undiscovered; or passed through so many countries without being secured, either on account of his crimes, or for the benefit of some such speculator as Mr. Polito, who would have been happy to have added to his museum so curious a specimen of natural history. But as we have consented to admit the leading incident of the work, perhaps some of our readers may be of opinion, that to stickle upon lesser improbabilities, is to incur the censure bestowed by the Scottish proverb on those who "start at straws, after swallowing *windlings*."

The following lines which occur in the second volume,

mark, we think, that the author possesses the same facility in expressing himself in verse as in prose.

> "We rest; a dream has power to poison sleep.
> We rise; one wand'ring thought pollutes the day.
> We feel, conceive, or reason; laugh, or weep,
> Embrace fond wo, or cast our cares away;
> It is the same; for, be it joy or sorrow,
> The path of its departure still is free.
> Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow;
> Naught may endure but mutability!"

Upon the whole, the work impresses us with a high idea of the author's original genius and happy power of expression. We shall be delighted to hear that he has aspired to the *paulo majora;* and, in the meantime congratulate our readers upon a novel which excites new reflections and untried sources of emotion. If Gray's definition of Paradise, to lie on a couch, namely, and read new novels, come anything near truth, no small praise is due to him, who, like the author of *Frankenstein*, has enlarged the sphere of that fascinating enjoyment.

END OF VOL. I.